

# Republic of Letters.

WM. PEARSON,  
115 Fulton St.

NEW-YORK, 1834.

NUMBER 14.  
PRICE SIX CENTS.

NO WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THIS JOURNAL WITHOUT HAVING PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED THE SANCTION OF GENTLEMEN EMINENT IN LITERATURE.

a cloak, with her face concealed in a black bonnet. The stranger, whoever she might be, seemed wearied and worn out, and her feet bore witness to a long day's travel across the marshy mountains. Although she could scarcely help considering her an unwelcome visitor at such an hour, yet Mary had too much sweetness of disposition—too much humanity, not to request her to step forward into the hut; for it seemed as if the wearied woman had lost her way, and had come towards the shining window to be put right upon her journey to the low country.

The stranger took off her bonnet on reaching the fire; and Mary Robinson beheld the face of one whom, in youth, she had tenderly loved; although for some years past, the distance at which they lived from each other had kept them from meeting, and only a letter or two written in their simple way, had given them a few notices of each other's existence. And now Mary had opportunity, in the first speechless gaze of recognition, to mark the altered face of her friend—and her heart was touched with an ignorant compassion. "For mercy's sake! sit down, Sarah! and tell me what evil has befallen you; for you are as white as a ghost. Fear not to confide any thing to my bosom; we have herded sheep together on the lonesome braes—we have stripped the bark together in the more lonesome woods—we have played, laughed, sung, danced together—we have talked merrily and gayly, but innocently enough surely of sweethearts together; and Sarah, graver thoughts, too, have we shared, for, when your poor brother died away like a frosted flower, I wept as if I had been his sister; nor can I ever be so happy in this world as to forget him. Tell me, my friend, why are you here? and why is your sweet face so ghastly?"

The heart of this unexpected visitor died within her at these kind and affectionate inquiries. For she had come on an errand that was likely to dash the joy from that happy countenance. Her heart upbraided her with the meanness of the purpose for which she had paid this visit; but that was only a passing thought; for she was innocent and free from sin, to submit, not only to desertion, but to disgrace, and not trust herself and her wrongs, and hopes of redress to her whom she loved as a sister, and whose generous nature she well knew, not even love, the change of so many things, could change utterly; though, indeed, it might render it colder than of old to the anguish of a female friend?

"Oh! Mary, I must speak—yet must my words make you grieve, far less for me than for yourself.—Wretch that I am,—I bring evil tidings into the dwelling of my dearest friend! These ribands—they are worn for his sake—they become well, as he thinks, the auburn of your bonny hair; that blue gown is wore to-night because he likes it; but Mary, will you curse me to my face, when I declare before the God that made us, that that man is pledged unto me by all that is sacred between mortal creatures; and that I have here in my bosom written promises and oaths of love from him who, I was this morning told, is in a few days to be thy husband. Turn me out of the hut now if you choose, and let me, if you choose, die of hunger and fatigue, in the woods where we have so often walked together; for such death would be mercy to me in comparison with your marriage with him who is mine for ever, if there be a God who heeds the oaths of the creatures he has made!"

Mary Robinson had led a happy life, but a life of quiet thoughts, tranquil hopes, and meek desires. Tenderly and truly did she love the man to whom she was now betrothed; but it was because she had thought him gentle, manly, upright, sincere, and one that feared God. His character was unimpeached,—to her his behavior had always been fond, affectionate, and respectful; that he was a fine-looking man, and could show himself among the best of the country round at church, and market, and fairday, she saw and felt with pleasure and with pride. But in the heart of this poor, humble, contented, and pious girl, love was not a violent passion, but an affection sweet and profound. She looked forwards to her marriage with a joyful sedateness, knowing that she would have to toil for her family, if blest with children; but happy in the thought of keeping her husband's house clean—of preparing his frugal meals, and welcoming him when wearied at night to her faithful, and affectionate, and grateful bosom.

At first, perhaps, a slight flush of anger towards Sarah tinged her cheek; then followed in quick succession, or all blended together in one sickening pang, fear, disappointment, the sense of wrong, and the cruel pain of disesteeming and despising one on whom her heart had rested with all its best and purest affections. But though there was a keen struggle between many feelings in her heart, her resolution was formed during that very conflict; and she said within herself, "If it be even so, neither will I be so unjust as to deprive poor Sarah of the man who ought to marry her, nor will I be so mean and low-spirited, poor as I am, and dear as he has been unto me, as to become his wife."

While these thoughts were calmly passing in the soul of this magnanimous girl, all her former affection for Sarah returned; and, as she sighed for herself, she wept aloud for her friend. "Be quiet, be quiet, Sarah, and sob not so as if your heart were breaking. It need not be thus with you.

Oh! sob not so sair! You surely have not walked in this one day from the heart of the parish of Monrath?" "I have indeed done so, and I am as weak as the wretched snaw. God knows, little matter if I should die away; for, after all, I fear he will never think of me, for his wife, and you, Mary, will lose a husband with whom you would have been happy. I feel, after all, that I must appear a mean wretch in your eyes."

There was a silence between them; and Mary Robinson looking at the clock, saw that it wanted only about a quarter of an hour from the time of tryst. "Give me the oaths and promises you mentioned out of your bosom, Sarah, that I may show them to Gabriel when he comes. And once more I promise, by all the sunny and all the snowy days we have sat together in the same plaid on the hill-side, or in the lonesome charcoal plots and tents of green in the woods, that if my Gabriel—did I say my Gabriel?—has forsaken you and deceived me thus, never shall his lips touch mine again,—never shall he put ring on my finger—never shall this head lie in his bosom—no, never, never; notwithstanding all the happy, too happy hours and days I have been with him, near or at a distance—on the corn-rig—among the meadow-hay—in the singing school—at harvest-home—in this room, and in God's own house. So help me God, but I will keep this vow!"

Poor Sarah told, in a few hurried words, the story of her love and desertion—how Gabriel, whose business as a shepherd often took him into Monrath parish, had wooed her, and fixed every thing about their marriage, nearly a year ago. But that he had become causelessly jealous of a young man whom she scarcely knew; had accused her of want of virtue, and for many months had never once come to see her. "This morning, for the first time, I heard for a certainty, from one who knew Gabriel well, and all his concerns, that the banns had been proclaimed in the church between him and you; and that in a day or two you were to be married. And though I felt drowning, I determined to make a struggle for my life—for Oh! Mary, Mary, my heart is not like your heart, it wants your wisdom, your meekness, your piety; and if I am to lose Gabriel, will I destroy my miserable life, and face the wrath of God sitting in judgment upon sinners?"

At this burst of passion Sarah hid her face with her hands, as if sensible that she had committed blasphemy. Mary seeing her wearied, hungry, thirsty, and feverish, spoke to her in the most soothing manner; led her into the little parlour called the Spence, then removed into it the table, with the oaten cakes, butter, and milk; and telling her to take some refreshment, and then lie down in the bed, but on no account to leave the room till called for, gave her a sisterly kiss, and left her. In a few minutes the outer door opened, and Gabriel entered.

The lover said, "How is my sweet Mary?" with a beaming countenance, and gently drawing her to his bosom, he kissed her cheek. Mary did not—could not—wished not—at once to release herself from his enfolding arms. Gabriel had always treated her as the woman who was to be his wife; and though at this time her heart knew its own bitterness, yet she repelled not endearments that were so lately delightful, and suffered him to take her almost in his arms to their accustomed seat. He held her hand in his, and began to speak in his usual kind and affectionate language. Kind and affectionate it was, for though he ought not to have done so, he loved her, as he thought, better than his life. Her heart could not in one small short hour forget a whole year of bliss. She could not yet fling away with her own hand what, only a few minutes ago, seemed to her the hope of paradise. Her soul sickened within her, and she wished that she were dead, or never had been born.

"O Gabriel! Gabriel; well indeed have I loved you; nor will I say, after all that has passed between us, that you are not deserving, after all, of a better love than mine. Vain were it to deny my love either to you, or to my own soul. But look me in the face—be not wrathful—think not to hide the truth either from yourself or me, for that now is impossible—but tell me solemnly, as you shall answer to God at the judgment day, if you know any reason why I must not be your wedded wife?" She kept her mild moist eyes fixed upon him; but he hung down his head, and uttered not a word, for he was guilty before her, before his own soul, and before God.

"Gabriel, never could we have been happy; for you often, often told me, that all the secrets of your heart were known unto me, yet never did you tell me this.—How could you desert the poor innocent creature that loved you; and how could you use me so, who loved you perhaps as well as she, but whose heart God will teach not to forget you, for that may I never do, but to think on you with that friendship and affection which innocently I can bestow upon you, when you are Sarah's husband. For, Gabriel, I have this night sworn, not in anger or passion—no, no—but in sorrow and pity for another's wrongs—in sorrow also, deny it will I not, for my own, to look on you from this hour, as on one whose life is to be led apart from my life, and whose love must never more meet with my love. Speak not unto me, look not on me

with beseeching eyes. Duty and religion forbid us ever to be man and wife. But you know there is one, besides me, whom you loved before you loved me, and, therefore, it may be, better too; and that she loves you, and is faithful, as if God had made you one, I say without fear, I who have known her since she was a child, although fatally for the peace of us both, we have long lived apart. Sarah is in the house, and I will bring her unto you in tears, but not tears of penitence, for she is as innocent of that sin as I am, who now speak."

Mary went into the little parlour, and led Sarah forward in her hand. Despairing as she had been, yet when she had heard from poor Mary's voice speaking so fervently, that Gabriel had come, and that her friend was interceding in her behalf—the poor girl had arranged her hair in a small looking-glass—tied it up with a ribbon which Gabriel had given her, and put into the breast of her gown a little gilt brooch that contained locks of their blended hair. Pale but beautiful, for Sarah Pringle was the fairest girl in all the country, she advanced with a flush on that paleness of reviving hope, injured pride, and love that was ready to forgive all and forget all, so that once again she could be restored to the place in his heart that she had lost. "What have I ever done, Gabriel, that you should fling me from you? May my soul never live by the atonement of my Saviour, if I am not innocent of that sin, yes, of all distant thought of that sin with which you, even you, have in your heart-hardness charged me. Look me in the face, Gabriel, and think of all I have been unto you, and if you say that before God, and in your own soul, you believe me guilty, then will I go away out into the dark night, and long before morning, my troubles will be at an end."

Truth was not only in her fervent and simple words, but in the tone of her voice, the color of her face, and the light in her eyes. Gabriel had long shut up his heart against her. At first, he had doubted her virtue, and that doubt gradually weakened his affections. At last, he tried to believe her guilty, or to forget her altogether, when his heart turned to Mary Robinson, and he thought of making her his wife. His injustice—his wickedness—his baseness—which he had so long concealed in some measure from himself, by a dim feeling of wrong done him, and afterward by the pleasure of a new love, now appeared to him as they were, and without disguise. Mary took Sarah's hand and placed it within that of her contrite lover, for had the tumult of conflicting passions allowed him to know his own soul, such at that moment he surely was; saying with a voice as composed as the eyes with which she looked upon them, "I restore you to each other; and I already feel the comfort of being able to do my duty. I will be bride's maid. And now implore the blessing of God upon your marriage. Gabriel, your betrothed will sleep this night in my bosom. We will think of you better, perhaps, than you deserve. It is not for me to tell you what you have to repent of. Let us all three pray for each other this night, and evermore when we are on our knees before our Maker. The old people will soon be at home. Good night, Gabriel!" He kissed Sarah—and, giving Mary a look of shame, humility, and reverence, he went home to meditation and repentance.

It was now midsummer; and before the harvest had been gathered in throughout the higher valleys, or the sheep brought from the mountain-fold, Gabriel and Sarah were man and wife. Time passed on, and a blooming family cheered their board and fire-side. Nor did Mary Robinson, the Flower of the Forest, (for so the Woodcutter's daughter was often called,) pass her life in single blessedness. She, too, became a wife and a mother and the two families, who lived at last on adjacent farms, were remarkable for mutual affection, throughout all the parish; and more than one intermarriage took place between them, at a time when the worthy parents had almost entirely forgotten the trying incident of their youth.

## THE MINISTER'S WIDOW.

THE dwelling of the Minister's Widow stood within a few fields of the beautiful village of Castle-Holm, about a hundred low-roofed houses that had taken the name of the parish of which they were the little romantic capital. Two small regular rows of cottages faced each other, on the gentle acclivity of a hill, separated by a broomy common of rich pasture, through which hurried a translucent lochborn rivulet, with here and there its shelves and waterfalls overhanging by the alder or weeping birch. Each straw-roofed abode, snug and merry as a bee-hive, had behind it a few rods of garden ground; so that, in spring, the village was covered with a fragrant cloud of blossoms on the pear, apple, and plum trees; and in autumn was brightened with golden fruitage. In the heart of the village stood the Manse—and in it had she, who was now a widow, passed twenty years of privacy and peace. On the death of her husband, she had retired with her family—three boys, to the pleasant cottage which she now inhabited. It belonged to the old lady of the Castle, who was patroness of the parish, and who accepted from the minister's widow, of a mere trifle as a nominal rent. On approaching

the village, strangers always fixed upon the Sunny-side for the Manse itself; for an air of serenity and retirement brooded over it as it looked out from below its sheltering eaves, and the farm-yard with its corn-stack marking the homestead of the agricultural tenant was there wanting. A neat gravel-walk winded away, under a weed, from the white gate by the road-side, through lilacs and laburnums; and the untrifled and unbroken order of all the breathing things that grew around, told that a quiet and probably small family lived within those beautiful boundaries.

The change from the Manse to Sunny-side had been with the widow a change from happiness to resignation. Her husband had died of a consumption; and for nearly a year she had known that his death was inevitable.—Both of them had lived in the spirit of that Christianity which he had preached, and therefore the last year they passed together, in spite of the many bitter tears which she who was to be the survivor shed when none were by to see, was perhaps on the whole the best deserving of the name of happiness, of the twenty that had passed over their earthly union. To the dying man death had lost all its terrors. He sat beside his wife, with his bright hollow eyes and emaciated frame, among the balmy shades of his garden, and spoke with fervor of the many tender mercies God had vouchsafed to them here, and of the promises made to all who believed in the gospel. They did not sit together to persuade, to convince, or to uphold each other's faith; for they believed in the things that were unseen, just as they believed in the beautiful blossomed arbor that then contained them in its shading silence. Accordingly when the hour was at hand, in which he was to render up his spirit into the hand of God, he was like a grateful and wearied man falling into a sleep. His widow closed his eyes with her own hands, nor was her soul then disquieted within her. In a few days she heard the bell tolling, and from her sheltered window looked out, and followed the funeral with streaming eyes but an unweeping heart. With a calm countenance, an humble voice, she left and bade farewell to the sweet Manse, where she had so long been happy—and as her three beautiful boys, with faces dimmed by natural grief, but brightened by natural gladness, glided before her steps, she shut the gate of her knew dwelling with an undisturbed soul, and moved her lips in silent thanksgiving to the God of the fatherless and the widow.

Her three boys, each one year older than the other, grew in strength and beauty, the pride and flower of the parish. In school they were quiet and composed; but in play-hours they bounded in their glee together like young deer, and led the sportful flock in all excursions through the wood or over moor. They resembled, in features and in voice, both of their gentle parents; but nature had moulded to quite another character their joyful and impetuous souls. When sitting or walking with their mother, they subdued their spirits down to suit her equable and gentle contentment; and behaved towards her with a delicacy and thoughtfulness, which made her heart to sing for joy. So too did they sit in the Kirk on Sabbath, and during all that day the fountain of their joy seemed to subside and to lie still. They knew to stand solemnly with their mother, now and then on the calm summer evenings, beside their father's grave. They remembered well his pale kind face—his feeble walk—his bending frame—his hand laid in blessing on their young heads—and the last time they ever heard him speak.—The glad boys had not forgotten their father; and that they proved by their piety unto her whom most on earth had their father loved. But their veins were filled with youth, health, and the electricity of joy; and they carried without and within the house such countenances as at any time coming upon their mother's eyes on a sudden, was like a torch held up in the dim melancholy of a mist, diffusing cheerfulness and elevation.

Years passed on. Although the youngest was but a boy, the eldest stood on the verge of manhood, for he had entered his seventeenth year, and was bold, straight, and tall, with a voice deepening in its tone, a graver expression round the gladness of his eyes, and a sullen mass of coal-black hair hanging over the smooth whiteness of his open forehead. But why describe the three beautiful brothers? They knew that there was a world lying at a distance that called upon them to leave the fields, and woods, and streams, and lochs of Castle-holm; and, born and bred in peace as they had been, their restless hearts were yet all on fire, and they burned to join a life of danger, strife, and tumult. No doubt it gave their mother a sad heart to think that all her three boys who she knew loved her so tenderly could leave her all alone, and rush in the far-off world. But who shall curb nature?—Who ought to try to curb it when its bent is strong?—She reasoned a while, and tried to dissuade. But it was in vain. Then she applied to her friends; and the widow of the minister of Castle-holm, retired as his life had been, was not without friends of rank and power.—In one year her three boys had their wish—in one year they left Sunny-side, one after the other; William to India—Edward to Spain—and Harry to a man-of-war.

Still was the widow happy. The house that so often used to be ringing with joy was now indeed too, too silent; and that utter noiselessness sometimes made her heart sick when sitting by herself in the solitary room. But by nature she was a gentle, meek, resigned, and happy being; and had she even been otherwise, the sorrow who had suffered, and the spirit of religion which her whole life had instilled, must have reconciled her to what was now her lot. Great cause had she to be glad. Far away as India was, and seemingly more remote in her imagination, loving letters came from her son there in almost every ship that sailed for Britain; and if, at times, something delayed them, she came to believe in the necessity of such delays, and, without quaking, waited till the blessed letter did in truth appear. Of Edward, in Spain, she often heard—though for him she suffered more than for

the others. Not that she loved him better, for, like three stars, each possessed alike the calm haven of her heart; but he was with Wellesley, and the regiment, in which he served, seemed to be conspicuous in all skirmishes, and in every battle. Henry, her youngest boy, who left her before he had finished his fourteenth year, she often heard from; his ship sometimes put into port; and once, to the terror and consternation of her loving and yearning heart, the young midshipman stood before her, with a laughing voice, on the floor of the parlor, and rushed into her arms. He had got leave of absence for a fortnight; and proudly, although sadly too, did she look on her dear boy when he was sitting in the Kirk with his uniform on, and his war weapons by his side—a fearless and beautiful stripling, on whom many an eye was insensibly turned even during service. And, to be sure, when the congregation were dismissed, and the young sailor came smiling out into the church-yard, never was there such a shaking of hands seen before. The old men blessed the gallant boy—many of the mothers looked at him not without tears; and the young maidens, who had heard that he had been in a bloody engagement, and once nearly shipwrecked, gazed upon him with unconscious blushes, and bosoms that beat with innocent emotion. A blessed week it was indeed that he was then with his mother; and never before had Sunny-side seemed so well to deserve its name.

To love, to fear, and to obey God, was the rule of this widow's life. And the time was near at hand when she was to be called upon to practise it in every silent, secret, darkest corner and recess of her afflicted spirit.—Her eldest son, William, fell in storming a fort in India, as he led the forlorn hope. He was killed dead in a moment, and fell into the trench with all his lofty plumes. Edward was found dead at Talavera, with the colors of his regiment tied round his body. And the ship in which Henry was on board, that never would have struck her flag to any human power sailing on the sea, was driven by a storm on a reef of rocks—went to pieces during the night—and of eight hundred men not fifty were saved. Of that number Henry was not—but his body was found next day on the sand, along with those of many of the crew, and buried, as it deserved, with all honors, and in a place where few but sailors slept.

In one month, one little month, did the tidings of the three deaths reach Sunny-side. A government letter informed her of William's death, in India, and added, that, on account of the distinguished character of the young soldier, a small pension would be settled on his mother. Had she been starving of want, instead of blest with competence, that word would have had then no meaning to her ear. Yet true it is, that a human—an earthly pride, cannot be utterly extinguished, even by severest anguish, in a mother's heart, yea, even although her best hopes are garnered up in heaven; and the weeping widow could not help feeling it now, when, with the black wax below her eyes, she read how her dear boy had not fallen in the service of an ungrateful state. A few days afterwards, a letter came from himself, written in the highest spirits and tenderest affection. His mother looked at every word—every letter—every dash of the pen;—and still one thought, one thought only, was in her soul, "the living hand that traced these lines, where, what is it now?" But this was the first blow only: ere the new moon was visible, the widow knew that she was altogether childless.

It was in a winter hurricane that her youngest boy had perished; and the names of those whose health had hitherto been remembered at every festive Christmas throughout all the parish, from the Castle to the humblest hut, were now either suppressed within the heart, or pronounced with a low voice and a sigh. During three months, Sunny-side looked almost as if uninhabited.—Yet the smoke from one chimney told that the childless widow was sitting alone at her fireside; and when her only servant was spoken to at church, or on the village green, and asked how her mistress was bearing these dispensations, the answer was, that her health seemed little, if at all impaired, and that she talked of coming to divine service in a few weeks, if her strength would permit.—She had been seen, through the leafless hedge, standing at the parlor window, and had motioned with her hand to a neighbor who, in passing, had uncovered his head. Her weekly bounty to several poor and bed-ridden persons had never suffered but one week's intermission.—It was always sent to them on Saturday night; and it was on Saturday night that all the parish had been thrown into tears, with the news that Henry's ship had been wrecked, and the brave boy drowned. On that evening she had forgotten the poor.

But now the spring had put forth her tender buds and blossoms—had strown the black ground under the shrubs with flowers—and was bringing up the soft, tender, and beautiful green over the awakening face of the earth.—There was a revival of the spirit of life and gladness over the garden, and the one encircling field of Sunny-side; and so, likewise, under the grace of God, was there a revival of the soul that had been sorrowing within its concealment. On the first sweet dewy Sabbath of May, the widow was seen closing behind her the little white gate, which for some months her hand had not touched. She gave a gracious, but mournful smile to all her friends, as she passed on through the midst of them, along with the minister, who had joined her on entering the church-yard; and although it was observed that she turned pale as she sat down in her pew, with the Bibles and Psalm-books that had belonged to her sons lying before her, as they themselves had enjoyed when they went away, yet her face brightened even as her heart began to burn within her, at the simple music of the psalm.—The prayers of the congregation had some months before been requested for her, as a person in great distress; and during service, the young minister, according to her desire, now said a few simple words, that intimated to the congregation, that the childless widow was, through his lips, returning thanks to Almighty God, for

that he had not forsaken her in her trouble, but sent resignation and peace.

From that day, she was seen, as before, in her house, in her garden, along the many pleasant walks all about the village, and in the summer evenings, though not so often as formerly, in the dwellings of her friends, both high and low. From her presence a more gentle manner seemed to be breathed over the rude, and more heartfelt delicacy over the refined. Few had suffered as she had suffered; all her losses were such as could be understood, felt, and wept over by all hearts; and all boisterousness or levity of joy would have seemed an outrage on her, who, sad and melancholy herself, yet wished all around her happy, and often lighted up her countenance with a grateful smile, at the sight of that pleasure which she could not but observe to be softened, sobered, and subdued for her sake.

Such was the account of her, her sorrows, and her resignation, which I received on the first visit I paid to a family near Castle-Holm, after the final consummation of her grief. Well known to me had all the dear boys been; their father and mine had been laborers in the same vineyard; and as I had always been a welcome visitor, when a boy, at the Manse of Castle-Holm, so had I been when a man, at Sunny-side. Last time I had been there, it was during the holidays, and I had accompanied the three boys on their fishing excursions to the Lochs in the moor; and in the evenings pursued with them their humble and useful studies; so I could not leave Castle-Holm without visiting Sunny-side, although my heart misgave me, and I wished I could have delayed it till another summer.

I sent word that I was coming to see her, and I found her sitting in that well-known little parlor, where I had partaken the pleasure of so many merry evenings, with those whose laughter was now extinguished. We sat for a while together speaking of ordinary topics, and then utterly silent. But the restraint she had imposed upon herself she either thought unnecessary any longer, or felt it to be impossible; and, rising up, went to a little desk, from which she brought forth three miniatures, and laid them down upon the table before us, saying, "Behold the faces of my three dead boys!"

So bright, breathing, and alive did they appear, that for a moment I felt impelled to speak to them, and to whisper their names. She beheld my emotion, and said unto me, "Oh! could you believe that they are all dead! Does not that smile on Willy's face seem as if it were immortal? Do not Edward's sparkling eyes look so bright as if the mists of death could never have overshadowed them? and think—Oh! think that ever Henry's golden hair should have been dragged in the brine, and filled full, full, I doubt not, of the soiling sand."

I put the senseless images one by one to my lips, and kissed their foreheads—for dearly had I loved these three brothers; and then I shut them up and removed them to another part of the room. I wished to speak, but I could not; and looking on the face of her who was before me, I knew that her grief would find utterance, and that not until she had unburdened her heart could it be restored to repose.

"They would tell you, Sir, that I bear my trials well; but it is not so. Many, many unresigned and ungrateful tears has my God to forgive in me, a poor, weak, and repining woman. Almost every day, almost every night, do I weep before these silent and beautiful phantoms; and when I wipe away the breath and mist of tears from their faces, there are they smiling continually upon me! Oh! death is a shocking thought when it is linked in love with creatures so young as these! More insupportable is gushing tenderness, than even dry despair; and, methinks I could bear to live without them, and never to see them more, if I could only cease to pity them! But that can never be. It is for them I weep, not for myself. If they were to be restored to life, would I not lie down with thankfulness in the grave?—William and Edward were struck down, and died, as they thought, in glory and triumph. Death to them was merciful. But who can know, although they may try to dream of it in horror, what the youngest of them, my sweet Harry, suffered, through that long dark howling night of snow, when the ship was going to pieces on the rocks?"

That last dismal thought held her for a while silent; and some tears stood in drops on her eye-lashes, but seemed again to be absorbed. Her heart appeared unable to cling to the horrors of the shipwreck, although it coveted them; and her thoughts reverted to other objects. "I walk often into the rooms where they used to sleep, and look on their beds till I think I see their faces lying with shut eyes on their pillows. Early in the morning, do I often think I hear them singing—I waken from troubled unrest, as if the knock of their sportive hands were at my door summoning me to rise. All their stated hours of study and of play—when they went to school and returned from it—when they came in to meals—when they said their prayers—when they went leaping at night to bed as lightsoomers, after all the day's fatigue, as if they had just risen. Oh!—Sir—at all these times, and many, and many a time besides these, do I think of them whom you loved."

While thus she kept indulging the passion of her grief, she observed the tears I could no longer conceal; and the sight of my sorrow seemed to give, for a time, a loftier character to hers, as if my weakness made her aware of her own, and she had become conscious of the character of her vain lamentations. "Yet why should I so bitterly weep? Pain had not troubled them—passion had not disturbed them—vice had not polluted them. May I not say, 'My children are in heaven with their father'—and ought I not, therefore, to dry up all these foolish tears now and for evermore?"

Composure was suddenly shed over her countenance, like gentle sunlight over a cheerless day, and she looked around the room as if searching for some pleasant object that clouded her sight. "See," said she, "yonder are all their books,



arranged just as Henry arranged them on his unexpected visit. Alas! too many of them are about the troubles and battles of the sea! But it matters not now. You are looking at that drawing. It was done by himself—that is the ship he was so proud of, sailing in sunshine, and a pleasant breeze. Another ship indeed was she soon after, when she lay upon the reef! But as for the books, I take them out of their places and dust them, and return them to their places, every week. I used to read to my boys, sitting round my knees, out of many of these books, before they could read themselves—but now I never peruse them, for their cheerful stories are not for me. But there is one book I do read, and without it I should long ago have been dead. The more the heart suffers, the more does it understand that book. Never do I read a single chapter, without feeling assured of something more awful in our nature than I felt before. My own heart misgives me; my own soul betrays me; all my comforts desert me in a panic; but never yet once did I read one whole page of the New Testament that I did not know that the eye of God is on all his creatures, and on me like the rest, though my husband and all my sons are dead, and I may have many years yet to live alone on the earth.

After this we walked out into the little avenue, now dark with the deep rich shadows of summer beauty. We looked at that beauty, and spoke of the surpassing brightness of the weather during all June, and advancing July. It is not in nature always to be sad; and the remembrance of all her melancholy and even miserable confessions, was now like an uncertain echo, as I beheld a placid smile on her face, a smile of such perfect resignation, that it might not falsely be called a smile of joy. We stood at the little white gate; and with a gentle voice, that perfectly accorded with that expression, she bade God bless me; and then with composed steps, and now and then turning up, as she walked along, the massy flower-branches of the laburnum as bent with their load of beauty they trailed upon the ground, she disappeared into that retirement, which, notwithstanding all I had seen and heard, I could not but think deserved almost to be called happy, in a world which even the most thoughtless know is a world of sorrow.

#### THE SNOW-STORM.

In summer there is beauty in the wildest moors of Scotland, and the wayfarer man who sits down for an hour's rest beside some little spring that flows unheard through the brightened moss and water-cresses, feels his weary heart revived by the silent, serene, and solitary prospect. On every side sweet sunny spots of verdure smile towards him from among the melancholy heather—unexpectedly in the solitude a stray sheep, it may be with its lamb, starts half alarmed at his motionless figure—insects large, bright, and beautiful, come carolling by him through the desert air—nor does the Wild want its own songsters, the gray linnet, fond of the blooming furze, and now and then the lark mounting up to Heaven above the summits of the green pastoral hills. During such a sunny hour, the lonely cottage on the waste seems to stand in a paradise; and as he rises to pursue his journey, the traveller looks back and blesses it with a mingled emotion of delight and envy. There, thinks he, abide the children of Innocence and Contentment, the two most benign spirits that watch over human life.

But other thoughts arise in the mind of him who may chance to journey through the same scene in the desolation of winter. The cold bleak sky girdles the moor as with a belt of ice—life is frozen in air and on earth.—The silence is not of repose but extinction—and should a solitary human dwelling catch his eye half buried in the snow, he is sad for the sake of them whose destiny it is to abide far from the cheerful haunts of men, shrouded up in melancholy, by poverty held in thrall, or pining away in unvisited and untended disease.

But, in good truth, the heart of human life is but imperfectly discovered from its countenance; and before we can know what the summer, or what the winter yields for enjoyment or trial to our country's peasantry, we must have conversed with them in their fields and by their firesides; and make ourselves acquainted with the powerful ministry of the seasons, not over those objects alone that feed the eye and the imagination, but over all the incidents, occupations, and events, that modify or constitute the existence of the poor.

I have a short and simple story to tell of the winter life of the moorland cottager—a story but of one evening—with few events and no signal catastrophe—but which may happily please those hearts whose delight it is to think on the humble under-plots that are carrying on in the great drama of Life.

Two cottagers, husband and wife, were sitting by their cheerful peat-fire one winter evening, in a small lonely hut on the edge of a wide moor, at some miles distance from any other habitation. There had been, at one time, several huts of the same kind erected close together, and inhabited by families of the poorest class of day-laborers, who found work among the distant farms, and at night returned to dwellings which were rent-free, with their little garden won from the waste. But one family after another had dwindled away, and the turf-built huts had all fallen into ruins, except one that had always stood in the centre of this little solitary village, with its summer walls covered with the richest honey-suckles, and in the midst of the brightest of all the gardens. It alone now sent up its smoke into the clear winter sky—and its little end window, now lighted up, was the only ground-star that shone towards the belated traveller, if any such ventured to cross, on a winter night, a scene so dreary and desolate. The affairs of the small household were all arranged for the night. The little rough penny that had drawn in a sledge, from the heart of the Black-Moss, the fuel by whose blaze the cotters

were now sitting cheerily, and the little Highland cow, whose milk enabled them to live, were standing amicably together, under cover of a rude shed, of which one side was formed by the peat-stack, and which was at once byre, and stable, and hen-roost. Within, the clock ticked cheerfully as the fire-light reached its old oak-wood case across the yellow-sanded floor—and a small round table stood between, covered with a snow-white cloth, on which were milk and oat-cakes, the morning, mid-day, and evening meal of these frugal and contented cotters. The spades and the mattocks of the laborer were collected into one corner, and showed that the succeeding day was the blessed Sabbath—while on the wooden chimney-piece was seen lying an open Bible ready for family worship.

The father and the mother were sitting together without opening their lips, but with their hearts overflowing with happiness, for on this Saturday-night they were, every minute, expecting to hear at the latch the hand of their only daughter, a maiden of about fifteen years, who was at service with a farmer over the hills. This dutiful child was, as they knew, to bring home to them "her sair-worn penny fee," a pittance which, in the beauty of her girlhood, she earned singing at her work, and which, in the benignity of that sinless time, she would pour with tears into the bosoms she so dearly loved. Forty shillings a year were all the wages of sweet Hannah Lee—but though she wore at her labor a tortoise shell comb in her auburn hair, and though in the Kirk none were more becomingly arrayed than she, one half, at least, of her earnings were to be reserved for the holiest of all purposes, and her kind innocent heart was gladdened when she looked on the little purse that was, on the long expected Saturday-night, to be taken from her bosom, and put, with a blessing, into the hand of her father, now growing old at his daily toils.

Of such a child the happy cotters were thinking in their silence. And well indeed might they be called happy. It is at that sweet season that filial piety is most beautiful. Their own Hannah had just outgrown the mere unthinking gladness of childhood, but had not yet reached that time, when inevitable selfishness mixes with the pure current of love. She had begun to think on what her affectionate heart had left so long; and when she looked on the pale face and bending frame of her mother, on the deepening wrinkles and whitening hairs of her father, often would she lie weeping for their sakes on her midnight bed—and wish that she were beside them as they slept, that she might kneel down and kiss them, and mention their names over and over again in her prayer. The parents whom before she had only loved, her expanding heart now also venerated. With gushing tenderness was now mingled a holy fear and an awful reverence. She had discerned the relation in which she, an only child, stood to her poor parents, now that they were getting old, and there was not a passage in Scripture, that spoke of parents or of children, from Joseph sold into slavery, to Mary weeping below the cross, that was not written, never to be obliterated, on her uncorrupted heart.

The father rose from his seat, and went to the door, to look out into the night. The stars were in thousands—and the full moon was risen. It was almost light as day, and the snow, that seemed encrusted with diamonds, was so hardened by the frost, that his daughter's homeward feet would leave no mark on its surface. He had been toiling all day among the distant Castle-woods, and stiff and wearied as he now was, he was almost tempted to go to meet his child—but his wife's kind voice dissuaded him, and returning to the fireside, they began to talk of her, whose image had been so long passing before them in their silence.

"She is growing up to be a bonny lassie," said the mother; "her long and weary attendance on me during my fever last spring, kept her down awhile—but now she is sprouting fast and fair as a lily, and may the blessing of God be as dew and as sunshine to our sweet flower all the days she bloometh upon this earth." "Ay, Agnes," replied the father, "we are not very old yet—though we are getting older—and a few years will bring her to woman's estate, and what thing on this earth, think ye, human or brute, would ever think of injuring her? Why, I was speaking about her yesterday to the minister as he was riding by, and he told me that none answered at the examination in the Kirk so well as Hannah. Poor thing—I well think she has all the Bible by heart—indeed, she has read but little else—only some stories—too true ones, of the blessed martyrs, and some of the auld songs of Scotland, in which there is nothing but what is good, and which, to be sure, she sings, God bless her, sweeter than any laversack." "Ay, were we both to die this very night she would be happy. Not that she would forget us all the days of her life." But have you not seen, husband, that God always makes the orphan happy?—None so little, some as they! They come to make friends of all the bonny and sweet things in the world around them, and all the kind hearts in the world make of them. They come to know that God is more especially the Father of them on earth whose parents he has taken up to heaven—and therefore it is that they for whom so many have fears, fear not at all for themselves, but go dancing and singing along like children whose parents are both alive! Would it not be so with our dear Hannah? So docile and thoughtful a child—but never sad nor miserable—ready, it is true, to shed tears for little, but as ready to dry them up and break out into smiles—I know not why it is, husband, but this night my heart warms towards her beyond usual. The moon and stars are at this moment looking down upon her, and she looking up to them, as she is gazing homewards over the snow. I wish she were but here, and taking the comb out of her bonny hair and letting it fall down in clusters before the fire, to melt away the craneruch."

While the parents were thus speaking of their daughter a

loud sigh of wind came suddenly over the cottage, and the leafless ash tree, under whose shelter it stood, creaked and groaned diamally as it passed by. The father started up, and going again to the door, saw that a sudden change had come over the face of the night. The moon had nearly disappeared, and was just visible in a dim, yellow, glimmering den in the sky. All the remote stars were obscured, and only one or two faintly seemed in a sky, that half an hour before was perfectly cloudless, but that was now driving with rack, and mist, and sleet, the whole atmosphere being in commotion. He stood for a single moment to observe the direction of this unforeseen storm, and then hastily asked for his staff. "I thought I had been more weather-wise—A storm is coming down from the Cairnbrae-hawse, and we shall have nothing but a wild night." He then whistled on his dog—as old sheep-dog, too old for its former labors—and set off to meet his daughter, who might then, for aught he knew, be crossing the Black-moss. The mother accompanied her husband to the door, and took a long frightened look at the angry sky. As she kept gazing, it became still more terrible. The last shred of blue was extinguished—the wind went whirling in roaring eddies, and great flakes of snow circled about in the middle air, whether drifted up from the ground, or driven down from the clouds, the fear-stricken mother knew not, but she at last knew, that it seemed a night of danger, despair, and death. "Lord have mercy on us, James, what will become of our poor bairn!" But her husband heard not her words, for he was already out of sight in the snow-storm, and she was left to the terror of her own soul in that lonesome cottage.

Little Hannah Lee had left her master's house, soon as the rim of the great moon was seen by her eyes, that had been long anxiously watching it from the window, rising like a joyful dream, over the gloomy mountain-tops; and all by herself she tripped along beneath the beauty of the silent heaven. Still as she kept ascending and descending the knolls that lay in the bosom of the glen, she sang to herself a song, a hymn, or a psalm, without the accompaniment of the streams, now all silent in the frost; and ever and anon she stopped to try to count the stars that lay in some more beautiful part of the sky, or gazed on the constellations that she knew, and called them in her joy, by the names they bore among the shepherds. There were none to hear her voice, or see her smiles, but the ear and eye of Providence. As she glided, and took her looks from heaven, she saw her own little fireside—her parents waiting for her arrival—the Bible open for worship—her own little room kept so neatly for her, with its mirror hanging by the window, in which to braid her hair by the morning light—her bed prepared for her by her mother's hand—the primroses in the garden peeping through the snow—old Tray, who ever welcomed her home with his dim white eyes—the poney and the cow; friends all, and inmates of that happy household. So stepped she along, while the snow diamonds glittered around her feet, and the frost wore a wreath of lucid pearls round her forehead.

She had now reached the edge of the Black-moss, which lay half way between her master's and her father's dwelling, when she heard a loud noise coming down Glen-Scaie, and in a few seconds she felt on her face some flakes of snow. She looked up the glen, and saw the snow storm coming down fast as a flood. She felt no fears; but she ceased her song; and had there been a human eye to look upon her there, it might have seen a shadow on her face. She continued her course, and felt bolder and bolder every step that brought her nearer to her parent's house. But the snow-storm had now reached the Black-moss, and the broad line of light that had lain in the direction of her home, was soon swallowed up, and the child was in utter darkness. She saw nothing but the flakes of snow, interminably intermingled, and furiously wafted in the air, close to her head; she heard nothing but one wild, fierce, stifled howl. The cold became intense, and her little feet and hands were fast being benumbed into insensibility.

"It is a fearful change," muttered the child to herself; but still she did not fear, for she had been born in a moorland cottage, and lived all her days among the hardships of the hills. "What will become of the poor sheep!" thought she, but still she scarcely thought of her own danger, for innocence, and youth, and joy, are slow to think of aught evil befalling themselves, and thinking benignly of all living things, forget their own fear in their pity for other's sorrow. At last she could no longer discern a single mark on the snow, either of human steps, or of sheep-track, or the footprint of a wild-fowl. Suddenly, too, she felt out of breath and exhausted,—and shedding tears for herself at last, sank down in the snow.

It was now that her heart began to quake with fear. She remembered stories of shepherds lost in the snow,—of a mother and child frozen to death on that very moor,—and, in a moment, she knew that she was to die. Bitterly did the poor child weep, for death was terrible to her, who, though poor, enjoyed the bright little world of youth and innocence. The skies of heaven were dearer than she knew to her,—so were the flowers of earth. She had been happy at her work,—happy in her sleep,—happy in the Kirk on Sabbath. A thousand thoughts had the solitary child,—and in her own heart was a spring of happiness, pure and undisturbed as any fount that sparkles unseen all the year through in some quiet nook among the pastoral hills. But now there was to be an end of all this,—she was to be frozen to death,—and lie there till the thaw might come; and then her father would find her body, and carry it away to be buried in the Kirk-yard.

The tears were frozen on her cheeks as soon as shed,—and scarcely had her little hands strength to clasp themselves together, as the thought of an overruling and merciful Lord came across her heart. Then, indeed, the fears of this re-

ligious child were calmed, and she heard without terror the plover's wailing cry, and the deep boom of the bittern sounding in the moss. "I will repeat the Lord's Prayer." And drawing her plaid more closely around her, she whispered, beneath its ineffectual cover: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name,—thy kingdom come,—thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Had human aid been within fifty yards, it could have been of no avail—eye could not see her—ear could not hear her in that howling darkness. But that low prayer was heard in the centre of eternity,—and that little sinless child was lying in the snow, beneath the all-seeing eye of God.

The maiden having prayed to her Father in Heaven—then thought of her father on earth. Alas! they were not far separated! The father was lying but a short distance from his child—he too had sunk down in the drifting snow, after having, in less than an hour, exhausted all the strength of fear, pity, hope, despair, and resignation, that could rise in a father's heart blindly seeking to rescue his only child from death, thinking that one desperate exertion might enable them to perish in each other's arms. There they lay, within a stone's throw of each other, while a huge snow-drift was every moment piling itself up into a more insurmountable barrier between the dying parent and his dying child.

There was all this while a blazing fire in the cottage—a white spread table—and beds prepared for the family to lie down in peace. Yet was she who sat therein more to be pitied than the old man and the child stretched upon the snow. "I will not go to seek them—that would be tempting Providence—and willfully putting out the lamp of life. No! I will abide here, and pray for their souls!" Then, as she knelt down, looked she at the useless fire burning away so cheerfully, when all she loved might be dying of cold—and, unable to bear the thought, she shrieked out a prayer, as if she might pierce the sky up to the very throne of God, and send with it her own miserable soul to plead before him for the deliverance of her child and husband. She then fell down in blessed forgetfulness of all trouble, in the midst of the solitary cheerfulness of that bright-burning heart—and the Bible, which she had been trying to read in the pauses of her agony, remained clasped in her hands.

Hannah Lee had been a servant for more than six months—and it was not to be thought that she was not beloved in her master's family. Soon after she had left the house, her master's son, a youth of about eighteen years, who had been among the hills looking after the sheep, came home, and was disappointed to find that he had lost an opportunity of accompanying Hannah part of the way to her father's cottage. But the hour of eight had gone by, and not even the company of young William Grieve could induce the kind-hearted daughter to delay setting out on her journey a few minutes beyond the time promised to her parents. "I do not like the night," said William—"there will be a fresh fall of snow soon, or the witch of Glen Scrae is a liar, for a snow-cloud is hanging o'er the Birch-tree-land, and it may be down to the Black-moss as soon as Hannah Lee." So he called his two sheep-dogs that had taken their place under the long table before the window, and set out, half in joy, half in fear, to overtake Hannah, and see her safely across the Black-moss.

The snow began to drift so fast, that before he had reached the head of the glen, there was nothing to be seen but a little bit of the wooden rail of the bridge across the Sauch-burn. William Grieve was the most active shepherd in a large parish—he had often passed the night among the wintry hills for the sake of a few sheep, and all the snow that ever fell from Heaven would not have made him turn back when Hannah Lee was before him; and as his terrified heart told him, in imminent danger of being lost.—As he advanced, he felt that it was no longer a walk of love or friendship, for which he had been glad of an excuse. Death stared him in the face, and his young soul, now beginning to feel all the passions of youth, was filled with frenzy. He had seen Hannah every day—at the fireside—at work—in the Kirk—on holidays—at prayers—bringing supper to his aged parents—smiling and singing about the house from morning till night. She had often brought his own meal to him among the hills—and he now found that though he had never talked to her about love, except smilingly and playfully, that he loved her beyond father or mother, or his own soul. "I will save thee, Hannah," he cried with a loud sob, "or lie down beside thee in the snow—and we will die together in our youth." A wild whistling wind went by him, and the snow-flakes whirled so fiercely around his head, that he staggered on for a while in utter blindness. He knew the path that Hannah must have taken, and went forwards shouting aloud, and stopping every twenty yards to listen for a voice. He sent his well-trained dogs over the snow in all directions—repeating to them her name, "Hannah Lee," that the dumb animals might, in their sagacity, know for whom they were searching; and as they looked up in his face, and set off to scour the moor, he almost believed that they knew his meaning, (and it is probable they did,) and were eager to find in her bewildered mind the kind maiden by whose hand they had so often been fed. Often went they off into the darkness, and as often returned, but their looks showed that every quest had been in vain. Meanwhile the snow was of a fearful depth, and falling without intermission or diminution. Had the young shepherd been thus alone, walking across the moor on his ordinary business, it is probable that he might have been alarmed for his own safety—nay, that, in spite of all his strength and agility, he might have sunk down beneath the inclemency of the night and perished. But now the passion of his soul carried him with supernatural strength along, and extricated him from wraith and pitfall. Still there was no trace of poor Hannah Lee—and one of his dogs at last came close to his feet, worn out entirely, and afraid to leave its master—while the other was mute, and, as the shepherd thought, probably unable to force

its way out of some hollow or through some floundering drift. Then he at once knew that Hannah Lee was dead—and dashed himself down in the snow in a fit of passion. It was the first time that the youth had ever been sorely tried—all his hidden and unconscious love for the fair lost girl had flowed up from the bottom of his heart—and at once the sole object which had blessed his life and made him the happiest of the happy, was taken away and cruelly destroyed—so that sullen, wrathful, baffled, and despairing, there he lay cursing his existence, and in too great agony to think of prayer. "God!" he then thought, "has forsaken me, and why should he think on me, when he suffers one so good and beautiful as Hannah to be frozen to death?" God thought both of him and Hannah—and through his infinite mercy forgave the sinner in his wild turbulence of passion. William Grieve had never gone to bed without joining in prayer—and he revered the Sabbath-day and kept it holy. Much is forgiven to the human heart, by him who so fearfully framed it; and God is not slow to pardon the love which one human being bears to another, in his frailty—even though that love forget or arraign his own unsleeping providence. His voice has told us to love one another—and William loved Hannah in simplicity, innocence, and truth. That she should perish was a thought so dreadful, that, in its agony, God seemed a ruthless being—"blow—blow—blow—and drift us up for ever—we cannot be far sunder—O Hannah—Hannah—think ye not that the fearful God has forsaken us?"

As the boy groaned these words passionately through his quivering lips, there was a sudden lowness in the air, and he heard the barking of his absent dog, while the one at his feet hurried off in the direction of the sound, and soon loudly joined the cry. It was not a bark of surprise—or anger—or fear—but of recognition and love. William sprang up from his bed in the snow, and with his heart knocking at his bosom even to sickness, he rushed headlong through the drifts, with a giant's strength, and fell down half dead with joy and terror beside the body of Hannah Lee.

But he soon recovered from that fit, and lifting the cold corpse in his arms, he kissed her lips, and her cheeks, and her forehead, and her closed eyes, till, as he kept gazing on her face in utter despair, her head fell back on his shoulder, and a long deep sigh came from her inmost bosom. "She is yet alive, thank God!"—and as that expression left his lips for the first time that night, he felt a pang of remorse: "I said, O God, that thou hadst forsaken us—I am not worthy to be saved; but let not this maiden perish, for the sake of her parents, who have no other child." The distracted youth prayed to God with the same earnestness as if he had been beseeching a fellow-creature, in whose hand was the power of life and death. The presence of the Great Being was felt by him in the dark and howling wild, and strength was imparted to him as to a deliverer. He bore along the fair child in his arms, even as if she had been a lamb. The snow-drift blew not—the wind fell dead—a sort of glimmer, like that of an unbreaking and disappearing storm, gathered about him—his dogs barked, and jumped, and burrowed joyfully in the snow—and the youth, strong in sudden hope, exclaimed, "With the blessing of God, who has not deserted us in our sore distress, will I carry thee, Hannah, in my arms, and lay thee down alive in the house of thy father." At this moment there was no stars in heaven, but she was unconsciously lying, and said, as in a dream, "Send the ribbon that ties up my hair, as a keepsake to William Grieve." "She thinks that she is on her death-bed, and forgets not the son of her master. It is the voice of God that tells me she will not now die, and that, under His grace, I shall be her deliverer."

The short-lived rage of the storm was soon over, and William could attend to the beloved being on his bosom. The warmth of his heart seemed to infuse life into hers; and as he gently placed her feet on the snow, till he muffled her up in his plaid, as well as in her own, she made an effort to stand, and with extreme perplexity and bewilderment faintly inquired, where she was, and what fearful misfortune had befallen them? She was, however, too weak to walk; and as her young master carried her along, she murmured, "O William! what if my father be in the moor?—For if you, who need care so little about me, have come hither, as I suppose, to save my life, you may be sure that my father sat not within doors during the storm." As she spoke it was calm below, but the wind was still alive in the upper air, and cloud, rack, mist, and sleet, were all driving about in the sky. Out shone for a moment the pallid and ghostly moon, through a rent in the gloom, and by that uncertain light, came staggering forward the figure of a man. "Father—Father," cried Hannah—and his gray hairs were already on her cheek. The barking of the dogs and the shouting of the young shepherd had struck his ear, as the sleep of death was stealing over him, and with the last effort of benumbed nature, he had roused himself from that fatal torpor, and pressed through the snow-wreath that had separated him from his child. As yet they knew not of the danger each had endured,—but each judged of the other's suffering from their own, and father and daughter regarded one another as creatures rescued, and hardly yet rescued, from death.

But a few minutes ago, and the three human beings who loved each other so well, and now feared not to cross the moor in safety, were, as they thought, on their death-beds. Deliverance now shone upon them all like a gentle fire, dispelling that pleasant but deadly drowsiness; and the old man was soon able to assist William Grieve in leading Hannah along through the snow. Her color and her warmth returned, and her lover—for so might he well now be called—felt her heart gently beating against his side. Filled as that heart was with gratitude to God, joy in her deliverance, love to her father, and purest affection for her master's son, never before had the innocent maiden known what was happiness—and

never more was she to forget it. The night was now almost calm, and fast returning to its former beauty—when the party saw the first twinkle of the fire through the low window of the cottage of the moor. They soon were at the garden gate—and to relieve the heart of the wife and mother within, they talked loudly and cheerfully—naming each other familiarly, and laughing between, like persons who had known neither danger nor distress.

No voice answered from within—no footstep came to the door, which stood open as when the father had left it in his fear, and now he thought with affright that his wife, feeble as she was, had been unable to support the loneliness, and had followed him out into the night, never to be brought home alive. As they bore Hannah into the house, this fear gave way to worse, for there upon the hard clay floor lay the mother upon her face, as if murdered by some savage blow. She was in the same deadly swoon into which she had fallen on her husband's departure three hours before. The old man raised her up, and her pulse was still—no was her heart—her face pale and sunken—her body cold as ice. "I have recovered a daughter," said the old man, "but I have lost a wife," and he carried her, with a groan, to the bed, on which he laid her lifeless body. The sight was too much for Hannah, worn out as she was, and who had hitherto been able to support herself in the delightful expectation of gladdening her mother's heart by her safe arrival. She, too, now swooned away, and as she was placed on the bed beside her mother, it seemed indeed, that death, disappointed of its prey on the wild moor, had seized it in the cottage and by the fire-side. The husband knelt down by the bed-side, and held his wife's icy hand in his, while William Grieve, appalled and awestricken, hung over his Hannah, and inwardly implored God that the night's wild adventure might not now go so ghastly an end. But Hannah's young heart soon began once more to beat—and soon as she came to her recollection, she rose up with a face whiter than ashes, and free from all smiles, as if none had ever played there, and joined her father and young master in their efforts to restore her mother to life.

It was the mercy of God that had struck her down to the earth, insensible to the shrieking winds, and the fears that would otherwise have killed her. Three hours of that wild storm had passed over her head, and she heard nothing more than if she had been asleep in a breathless night of the summer dew. Not even a dream had touched her brain, and when she opened her eyes, which, as she thought, had been but a moment shut, she had scarcely time to recall to her recollection the image of her husband rushing out into the storm, and of a daughter therein lost, till she beheld that very husband kneeling tenderly by her bed-side, and that very daughter smoothing the pillow on which her aching temples reclined. But she knew from the white, steadfast countenances before her that these had been tribulation and deliverance, and she looked on the beloved beings ministering by her bed, as more fearfully dear to her from the unimagined danger from which she felt assured they had been rescued by the arm of the Almighty.

There is little need to speak of returning recollection and returning strength. They had all now power to weep, and power to pray. The Bible had been lying in its place ready for worship—and the father read aloud that chapter in which is narrated our Saviour's act of miraculous power, by which he saved Peter from the sea.—Soon as the solemn thoughts awakened by that act of mercy so similar to that which had rescued themselves from death had subsided, and they had all risen up from prayer, they gathered themselves in gratitude round the little table which had stood so many hours spread—and exhausted nature was strengthened and restored by a frugal and simple meal partaken of in silent thankfulness. The whole story of the night was then calmly recited—and when the mother heard how the stripling had followed her sweet Hannah into the storm, and borne her in his arms through a hundred drifted heaps—and then looked upon her in her pride, so young, so innocent, and so beautiful, she knew that were the child indeed to become an orphan, there was One, who, if there was either truth in nature, or truth in religion, would guard and cherish her all the days of her life.

It was not nine o'clock when the storm came down from Glen Scrae upon the Black-moss, and now in a pause of silence the clock struck twelve. Within these three hours William and Hannah had led a life of trouble and of joy, that had enlarged and kindled their hearts within them—and they felt that henceforth they were to live wholly for each other's sakes. His love was the proud and exulting love of a deliverer, who, under Providence, had saved from the frost and the snow, the innocence and the beauty of which his young passionate heart had been so desperately enamoured—and he now thought of his own Hannah Lee ever more moving about his father's house, not as a servant, but as a daughter—and when some few happy years had gone by, his own most beautiful and most loving wife. The innocent maiden still called him her young master—but was not ashamed of the holy affection which she now knew that she had long felt for the fearless youth on whose bosom she had thought herself dying in that cold and miserable moor. Her heart leaped within her when she heard her parents bless him by his name—and when he took her hand into his before them, and vowed before that Power who had that night saved them from the snow, that Hannah Lee should ere long be his wedded wife—she wept and sobbed as if her heart would break in a fit of strange and insupportable happiness.

The young shepherd rose to bid them farewell—"My father will think I am lost," said he, with a grave smile, "and my Hannah's mother knows what it is to fear for a child." So nothing was said to detain him, and the family went with him to the door. The skies smiled as serenely as if a storm had never swept before the stars—the moon was sinking from



her meridian, but in cloudless splendor—and the hollow of the hills was hushed as that of heaven. Danger there was none over the placid night-scene—the happy youth soon crossed the Black-moss, now perfectly still—and, perhaps, just as he was passing, with a shudder of gratitude, the very spot where his sweet Hannah Lee had so nearly perished, she was lying down to sleep in her innocence, or dreaming of one now dearer to her than all on earth but her parents.

### THE ELDER'S DEATH-BED.

It was on a fierce and howling winter day, that I was crossing the dreary moor of Auchindown on my way to the Manse of that parish, a solitary pedestrian. The snow, which had been incessantly falling for a week past, was drifted into beautiful but dangerous wreaths, far and wide, over the melancholy expanse—and the scene kept visibly shifting before me, as the strong wind that blew from every point of the compass struck the dazzling masses, and heaved them up and down in endless transformation. There was something inspiring in the labor with which, in the buoyant strength of youth, I forced my way through the storm—and I could not but enjoy those gleamings of sun-light that ever and anon burst through some unexpected opening in the sky, and gave a character of cheerfulness, and even warmth, to the sides or summits of the stricken hills. Sometimes the wind stopped of a sudden, and then the air was as silent as the snow—not a murmur to be heard from spring or stream, now all frozen up over those high moor-lands. As the momentary cessations of the sharp drift allowed my eyes to look onwards and around, I saw here and there up the little opening valleys, cottages just visible beneath the black stems of their snow-covered clumps of trees, or beside some small spot of green pasture kept open for the sheep. These intimations of life and happiness came delightfully to me in the midst of the desolation; and the barking of a dog, attending some shepherd in his quest on the hill, put fresh vigor into my limbs, telling me that, lonely as I seemed to be, I was surrounded by cheerful though unseen company, and that I was not the only wanderer over the moors.

As I walked along, my mind was insensibly filled with a crowd of pleasant images of rural winter-life, that helped me gladly onwards over many miles of moor. I thought of the severe but cheerful labors of the barn—the mending of farm-gear by the fireside—the wheel turned by the foot of old age, less for gain than as a thrifty pastime—the skilful mother, making "auld claes look amaisht as weel's the new"—the balld unconsciously listened to by the family all busy at their own tasks round the singing maiden—the old traditional tale told by some wayfarer hospitably housed till the storm should blow by—the unexpected visit of neighbors on need or friendship—or the footstep of lover undetected by snow-drifts that have buried up his flocks:—but, above all, I thought of those hours of religious worship that have not yet escaped from the domestic life of the peasantry of Scotland—of the sound of psalms that the depth of snow cannot deaden to the ear of Him to whom they are chanted—and of that sublime Sabbath-keeping, which, on days too tempestuous for the Kirk, changes the cottage of the shepherd into the temple of God.

With such glad and peaceful images in my heart, I travelled along that dreary moor, with the cutting wind in my face, and my feet sinking in the snow, or sliding on the hard blue ice beneath it—as cheerfully as I ever walked on the dewy warmth of a summer morning, through fields of fragrance and of flowers. And now I could discern, within half an hour's walk, before me, the spire of the church, close to which stood the Manse of my aged friend and benefactor. My heart burned within me, as a sudden gleam of stormy sunshine tipt it with fire—and I felt, at that moment, an inexpressible sense of the sublimity of the character of that gray-headed shepherd, who had, for fifty years, abode in the wilderness, keeping together his own happy little flock.

As I was ascending a knoll, I saw before me on horseback an old man, with his long white hairs beating against his face, who nevertheless advanced with a calm countenance against the hurricane. It was no other than my father, of whom I had been thinking—for my father had I called him for many years—and for many years my father had he truly been. My surprise at meeting him on such a moor—on such a day, was but momentary, for I knew that he was a shepherd who cared not for the winter's wrath. As he stooped to take my hand kindly into his, and to give his blessing to his long-expected visitor, the wind fell calm—the whole face of the sky was softened, and brightness, like a smile, went over the blushing and crimsoned snow. The very elements seemed then to respect the hoary head of fourscore—and after our first greeting was over, when I looked around in my affection, I felt how beautiful was winter.

"I am going," said he, "to visit a man at the point of death—a man whom you cannot have forgotten—whose head will be missed in the Kirk next Sabbath by all my congregation—a devout man, who feared God all his days, and whom, on this awful trial, God will assuredly remember. I am going, my son, to the Hazel-Glen."

I knew well in childhood that lonely farm-house, so far off among the beautiful wild green hills—and it was not likely that I had forgotten the name of its possessor. For many years' Sabbaths I had seen the ELDER in his accustomed place beneath the pulpit—and, with a sort of solemn fear, had looked on his steadfast countenance during sermon, psalm, and prayer. On returning to the scenes of my infancy, I now met the pastor going to pray by his death-bed—and with the privilege which nature gives to the beholder, even in their last extremity, the loving and the beloved, I turned to accompany him to the house of sorrow, resignation, and death.

And now for the first time, I observed walking close to the

feet of his horse, a little boy of about ten years of age, who kept frequently looking up in the pastor's face with his blue eyes bathed in tears. A changeful expression of grief, hope, and despair, made almost pale, cheeks that otherwise were blooming in health and beauty.—and I recognized, in the small features and smooth forehead of childhood, a resemblance to the aged man who we understood was now lying on his death-bed. "They had to send his grandson for me through the snow, mere child as he is," said the minister to me, looking tenderly on the boy; "but love makes the young heart bold—and there is One who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." I again looked on the fearless child with his rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and yellow hair, so unlike grief or sorrow, yet now sobbing aloud as if his heart would break. "I do not fear but that my grandfather will yet recover, soon as the minister has said one single prayer by his bed-side. I had no hope or little, as I was running by myself to the Manse over hill after hill, but I am full of hopes now that we are together; and oh! if God suffers my grandfather to recover, I will lie awake all the long winter nights blessing him for his mercy. I will rise up in the middle of the darkness, and pray to him in the cold on my naked knees!" and here his voice was choked, while he kept his eyes fixed, as if for consolation and encouragement, on the solemn and pitying countenance of the kind-hearted pious old man.

We soon left the main road, and struck off through scenery, that, covered as it was with the bewildering snow, I sometimes dimly and sometimes vividly remembered; our little guide keeping ever a short distance before us, and with a sagacity like that of instinct, showing us our course, of which no trace was visible, save occasionally his own little footprints as he had been hurrying to the Manse.

After crossing for several miles, morass, and frozen rivulet, and drifted hollow, with here and there the top of a stone-wall peeping through the snow, or the more visible circle of a sheep-bught, we descended into the Hazel-Glen, and saw before us the solitary house of the dying ELDER.

A gleam of days gone by came suddenly over my soul. The last time that I had been in this Glen was on a day of June, fifteen years before, a holiday, the birth-day of the king. A troop of laughing school-boys, headed by our benign pastor, we danced over the sunny braes, and started the linnets from their nests among the yellow broom. Auster as seemed to us the ELDER's Sabbath-face, when sitting on the Kirk, we schoolboys knew that it had its week-day smiles—and we flew on the wings of joy to our annual festival of curds and cream in the farm-house of that little sylvan world. We rejoiced in the flowers and the leaves of that long, that interminable summer-day; its memory was with our boyish hearts from June to June; and the sound of that sweet name, "Hazel-Glen," often came upon us at our tasks, and brought too brightly into the school-room the pastoral imagery of that mirthful solitude.

As we now slowly approached the cottage, through a deep snow-drift, which the distress within had prevented the household from removing, we saw, peeping out from the door, brothers and sisters of our little guide, who quickly disappeared, and then their mother showed herself in their stead, expressing, by her raised eyes and arms folded across her breast, how thankful she was to see, at last, the pastor, beloved in joy and trusted in trouble.

Soon as the venerable old man dismounted from his horse, our active little guide led it away into the humble stable, and we entered the cottage. Not a sound was heard but the ticking of the clock. The matron, who had silently welcomed us at the door, led us, with suppressed sighs and a face stained with weeping, into her father's sick room, which even in that time of sore distress was as orderly as if health had blessed the house. I could not help remarking some old china ornaments on the chimney-piece—and in the window was an ever-blowing rose-tree, that almost touched the lowly roof, and brightened that end of the apartment with its blossoms. There was something tasteful in the simple furniture; and it seemed as if grief could not deprive the hand of that matron of its careful elegance. Sickness, almost hopeless sickness, lay there, surrounded with the same cheerful and beautiful objects which health had loved: and she, who had arranged and adorned the apartment in her happiness, still kept it from disorder and decay in her sorrow.

With a gentle hand she drew the curtain of the bed, and there, supported by pillows as white as the snow that lay without, reposed the dying Elder. It was plain that the hand of God was upon him, and that his days on the earth were numbered.

He greeted his minister with a faint smile, and a slight inclination of the head—for his daughter had so raised him on the pillows, that he was almost sitting up in his bed. It was easy to see that he knew himself to be dying, and that his soul was prepared for the great change;—yet, along with the solemn resignation of a Christian who had made his peace with God and his Saviour, there was blended on his white and sunken countenance an expression of habitual reverence for the minister of his faith—and I saw that he could not have died in peace without that comfort to pray by his death-bed.

A few words sufficed to tell who was the stranger—and the dying man, blessing me by name, held out to me his cold shivering hand in token of recognition. I took my seat at a small distance from the bed-side, and left a closer station for those who were more dear. The pastor sat down near his head—and by the bed, leaning on it with gentle hands, stood that matron, his daughter-in-law; a figure that would have graced and sainted a higher dwelling, and whose native beauty was now more touching in its grief. But religion upheld her whom nature was bowing down; not now for the first time were the lessons taught by her father to be put into practice, for I saw that she was clothed in deep mourning—

and she behaved like the daughter of a man whose life had not been only irreproachable but lofty, with fear and hope fighting desperately but silently in the core of her pure and pious heart.

While we thus remained in silence, the beautiful boy, who, at the risk of his life, had brought the minister of religion to the bed-side of his beloved grandfather, softly and cautiously opened the door, and, with the hoarfrost yet unmet on his bright glistening ringlets, walked up to the pillow, evidently no stranger there. He no longer sobbed—he no longer wept—for hope had risen strongly within his innocent heart, from the consciousness of love so fearlessly exerted, and from the presence of the holy man in whose prayers he trusted, as in the intercession of some superior and heavenly nature.—There he stood, still as an image in his grandfather's eyes, that, in their dimness, fell upon him with delight. Yet, happy as was the trusting child, his heart was devoured by fear—and he looked as if one word might stir up the flood of tears that had subsided in his heart. As he crossed the dreary and dismal moor, he had thought of a corpse, a shroud, and a grave; he had been in terror, lest death should strike in his absence the old man, with whose gray hairs he had so often played; but now he saw him alive, and felt that death was not able to tear him away from the clasps, and links, and fetters of his grandfather's embracing love.

"If the storm do not abate," said the sick man, after a pause, "it will be hard for my friends to carry me over the drift to the Kirk-yard." This sudden approach to the grave, struck, as with a bar of ice, the heart of the loving boy—and with a long deep sigh, he fell down with his face like ashes on the bed, while the old man's palsied right hand had just strength to lay itself upon his head. "Blessed be thou, my little Jamie, even for his own name's sake who died for us on the tree!" The mother, without terror, but with an averted face, lifted up her loving-hearted boy, now in a dead fainting fit, and carried him into an adjoining room, where he soon revived: but that child and that old man were not to be separated; in vain he asked to go to his brothers and sisters; pale, breathless, and shivering, he took his place as before, with eyes fixed on his grandfather's face, but neither weeping nor uttering a word. Terror had frozen up the blood of his heart; but his were now the only dry eyes in the room; and the pastor himself wept, albeit the grief of fourscore is seldom vented in tears.

"God has been gracious to me, a sinner," said the dying man. "During thirty years that I have been an Elder in your Kirk, never have I missed sitting there one Sabbath. When the mother of my children was taken from me—it was on a Tuesday she died—and on Saturday she was buried. We stood together when my Alice was led down into the narrow house made for all living. On the Sabbath I joined in the public worship of God—she commanded me to do so the night before she went away. I could not join in the psalm that Sabbath, for her voice was not in the throng. Her grave was covered up, and grass and flowers grew there; so was my heart; but thou, whom, through the blood of Christ, I hope to see this night in Paradise, knowest, that from that hour to this day never have I forgotten thee."

The old man ceased speaking—and his grandchild, now able to endure the scene, for strong passion is its own support, glided softly to a little table, and bringing a cup in which a cordial had been mixed, held it in his small soft hands to his grandfather's lips. He drank, and then said, "Come closer to me, Jamie, and kiss me for thine own and thy father's sake; and as the child fondly pressed his rosy lips on those of his grandfather, so white and withered, the tears fell over all the old man's face, and then trickled down on the golden head of the child at last sobbing in his bosom.

"Jamie, thy own father has forgotten thee in his infancy, and me in my old age; but, Jamie, forget not thou thy father nor thy mother, for that thou knowest and feelest is the commandment of God."

The broken-hearted boy could give no reply. He had gradually stolen closer and closer unto the old loving man, and now was lying, worn out with sorrow, drenched and dissolved in tears, in his grandfather's bosom. His mother had sunk down on her knees, and hid her face with her hands. "Oh! if my husband knew but of this—he would never, never desert his dying father!" and I now knew that the Elder was praying on his death-bed for a disobedient and wicked son.

At this affecting time, the minister took the family Bible on his knees, and said, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God, part of the fifteenth Psalm," and he read, with a tremulous and broken voice, those beautiful verses

Within thy tabernacle, Lord,  
Who shall abide with thee?  
And in thy high and holy hill  
Who shall a dweller be?

The man that walketh uprightly  
And worketh righteousness,  
And as he thinketh in his heart,  
So doth he truth express.

The small congregation sung the noble hymn of the Psalmist to "Plaintive martyrs worthy of the name."—The dying man himself, ever and anon, joined in the holy music—and when it feebly died away on his quivering lips, he continued still to follow the tune with the motion of his withered hand, and eyes devoutly and humbly lifted up to Heaven. Nor was the sweet voice of his loving grandchild unheard; as if the strong fit of deadly passion had dissolved in the music, he sang with a sweet and silvery voice that to a passer-by had seemed that of perfect happiness—a hymn sung in joy upon its knees by gladsome childhood before it flew out among the green hills, to quiet labor or gleesome play. As that sweetest voice came from the bosom of the old man, where the singer

lay in affection; and blended with his own so tremulous, never had I felt so affectingly brought before me the beginning and the end of life, the cradle and the grave.

Ere the psalm was yet over, the door was opened, and a tall fine-looking man entered, but with a lowering and dark countenance, seemingly in sorrow, in misery, and remorse. Agitated, confounded, and awe-struck by the melancholy and dirge-like music, he sat down on a chair—and looked with a ghastly face towards his father's death-bed. When the psalm ceased, the Elder said with a solemn voice, "My son—thou art come in time to receive thy father's blessing. May the remembrance of what will happen in this room, before the morning again shine over the Hazel-Glen, win thee from the error of thy ways. Thou art here to witness the mercy of thy God and thy Saviour, whom thou hast forgotten."

The minister looked, if not with a stern, yet with an upbraiding countenance on the young man, who had not recovered his speech, and said, "William; for three years past your shadow has not darkened the door of the house of God. They who fear not the thunder, may tremble at the still small voice—now is the hour for repentance—that your father's spirit may carry up to Heaven tidings of a contrite soul saved from the company of sinners!"

The young man, with much effort, advanced to the bedside, and at last found voice to say, "Father—I am not without the affections of nature—and I hurried home soon as I had heard that the minister had been seen riding towards our house. I hope that you will yet recover—and if ever I have made you unhappy, I ask your forgiveness—for though I may not think as you do on matters of religion, I have a human heart. Father! I may have been unkind, but I am not cruel. I ask your forgiveness."

"Come nearer to me, William; kneel down by the bedside, and let my hand find the head of my beloved son—for blindness is coming fast upon me. Thou wert my first-born, and thou art my only living son. All thy brothers and sister are lying in the church-yard, beside her whose sweet face thine own, William, did once so much resemble. Long wert thou the joy, the pride of my soul—ay, too much the pride, for there was not in all the parish such a man, such a son, as my own William. If thy heart has since been changed, God may inspire it again with right thoughts. Could I die for thy sake—could I purchase thy salvation with the outpouring of thy father's blood—but this the Son of God has done for thee who hast denied him! I have sorely wept for thee—ay, William, when there was none near me—even as David wept for Absalom—for thee, my son, my son!"

A long deep groan was the only reply; but the whole body of the kneeling man was convulsed; and it was easy to see his sufferings, his contrition, his remorse, and his despair. The pastor said, with a sterner voice, and austerer countenance than were natural to him: "Know you whose hand is now lying on your rebellious head? But what signifies the word father to him who has denied God, the Father of us all?" "Oh! press him not so hardly," said the weeping wife, coming forward from a dark corner of the room, where she had tried to conceal herself in grief, fear, and shame; "spare, oh! spare my husband—he has ever been kind to me;" and with that she knelt down beside him, with her long, soft white arms mournfully and affectionately laid across his neck—"Go thou, likewise, my sweet little Jamie," said the Elder, "go even out of my bosom, and kneel down beside thy father and thy mother, so that I may bless you all at once, and with one yearning prayer." The child did as that solemn voice commanded, and knelt down somewhat timidly by his father's side; nor did that unhappy man decline encircling with his arm the child too much neglected, but still dear to him as his own blood, in spite of the deadening and debasing influence of infidelity.

"Put the Word of God into the hands of my son, and let him read aloud to his dying father the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. John." The pastor went up to the kneelers, and with a voice of pity, condolence, and pardon, said, "There was a time when none, William, could read the Scriptures better than couldst thou—can it be that the son of my friend hath forgotten the lessons of his youth?" He had not forgotten them—there was no need for the repentant sinner to lift his eyes from the bed-side. The sacred stream of the Gospel had worn a channel in his heart, and the waters were again flowing. With a choked voice he said, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

"That is not an unbeliever's voice," said the dying man triumphantly; "nor, William, hast thou an unbeliever's heart. Say that thou believest in what thou hast now read, and thy father will die happy!" "I do believe; and as thou forgivest me, so may I be forgiven by my Father who is in heaven."

The Elder seemed like a man suddenly inspired with a new life. His faded eyes kindled—his pale cheeks glowed—his palsied hands seemed to have strength—and his voice was clear as that of manhood in its prime. "Into thy hands, Oh God, I commit my spirit." And so saying, he gently sunk back on his pillow; and I thought I heard a sigh. There was then a long deep silence, and the father, and mother, and child, rose from their knees. The eyes of us all were turned towards the white pallid face of the figure now stretched in everlasting rest: and without lamentations, save the silent lamentations of the resigned soul, we stood around the DEATH-BED OF THE ELDER.

#### THE ELDER'S FUNERAL.

How beautiful to the eye and to the heart rise up, in a pastoral region, the green silent hills from the dissolving snow-wreaths that yet linger at their feet! A few warm sunny days, and a few breezy and melting nights, have seemed to create the sweet season of spring out of the winter's bleakest desolation. We can scarcely believe that such brightness of verdure could have been shrouded in the snow, blending itself, as it now does, so vividly with the deep blue of heaven. With the revival of nature our own souls feel restored. Happiness becomes milder—meeker—and richer in pensive thought; while sorrow catches a faint tinge of joy, and reposes itself on the quietness of earth's opening breast. Then is youth rejoicing—manhood sedate—and old age resigned. The child shakes his golden curls in his glee—he of riper life hails the coming year with temperate exultation, and the eye that has been touched with dimness, in the general spirit of delight, forgets or fears not the shadows of the grave.

On such a vernal day as this did we, who had visited the elder on his death-bed, walk together to his house in the Hazel-Glen, to accompany his body to the place of burial. On the night he died it seemed to be the dead of winter. On the day he was buried it seemed to be the birth of spring. The old pastor and I were alone for a while as we pursued our path up the glen, by the banks of the little burn. It had cleared itself off from the melted snow, and ran so pellucid a race, that every stone and pebble was visible in its yellow channel. The willows, the alders, and the birches, the fairest and the earliest of our native hill trees, seemed almost tinged with a verdant light, as if they were budding; and beneath them, here and there, peeped out, as in the pleasure of new existence, the primrose, lonely, or in little families and flocks. The bee had not yet ventured to leave his cell, yet the flowers reminded one of his murmur. A few insects were dancing in the air, and here and there some little moor-land bird, touched at the heart with the warm sunny change, was piping his love-sweet song among the braes. It was just such a day as a grave meditative man, like him we were about to inter, would have chosen to walk over his farm in religious contentment with his lot. That was the thought that entered the pastor's heart, as we paused to enjoy one brighter gleam of the sun in a little meadow-field of peculiar beauty.

"This is the last day of the week—and on that day often did the Elder walk through this little happy kingdom of his own, with some of his grandchildren beside and around him, and often his Bible in his hand. It is, you feel, a solitary place—all the vale is one seclusion—and often have its quiet bounds been a place of undisturbed meditation and prayer."

We now came in sight of the cottage, and beyond it the termination of the glen. There the high hills came sloping gently down; and a little waterfall, in the distance, gave animation to a scene of perfect repose. We were now joined by various small parties coming to the funeral through openings among the hills; all sedate, but none sad, and every greeting was that of kindness and peace. The Elder had died full of years; and there was no need why any out of his own household should weep. A long life of piety had been beautifully closed; and, therefore, we were all going to commit the body to the earth, assured, as far as human beings may be so assured, that the soul was in Heaven. As the party increased on our approach to the house, there was even cheerfulness among us. We spoke of the early and bright promise of spring—of the sorrows and the joys of other families—of marriages and births—of the new school-master—of to-morrow's Sabbath. There was no topic of which on any common occasion, it might have been fitting to speak, that did not now perhaps occupy for a few moments, some one or other of the group, till we found ourselves ascending the green sward before the cottage, and stood below the bare branches of the sycamores. Then we were all silent, and after a short pause, reverently entered into the house of death.

At the door the son received us with a calm, humble, and untroubled face; and in his manner towards the old minister, there was something that could not be misunderstood, expressing penitence, gratitude, and resignation. We all sat down in the large kitchen; and the son decently received each person at the door and showed him to his place. There were some old gray heads—more becoming gray—and many bright in manhood and youth. But the same solemn hush was over them all; and they sat all bound together in one uniting and assimilating spirit of devotion and faith. Wine and bread was to be sent round—but the son looked to the old minister, who rose, lifted up his withered hand, and began a blessing and a prayer.

There was much composure and stillness in the old man's attitude, and something so affecting in his voice, tremulous and broken, not in grief but age, that no sooner had he begun to pray, than every heart and every breath at once were hushed. All stood motionless, nor could one eye abstain from that placid and patriarchal countenance, with its closed eyes and long silvery hair. There was nothing sad in his words, but they were all humble and solemn, and at times even joyful in the kindling spirit of piety and faith. He spoke of the dead man's goodness as imperfect in the eyes of his great Judge, but such, as we were taught, might lead, through intercession, to the kingdom of heaven. Might the blessing of God, he prayed, which had so long rested on the head now confined, not forsake that of him who was now to be the father of this house. There was more—more joy, we were told, in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. Fervently, too, and tenderly, did the old man pray for her, in her silent chamber, who had lost so kind a parent, and for all the little

children round her knees. Nor did he end his prayer without some allusion to his own gray hairs, and to the approaching day on which many present would attend his burial.

Just as he ceased to speak, one solitary stifled sob was heard, and all eyes turned kindly round to a little boy who was standing by the side of the Elder's son. Restored once more to his own father's love, his heart had been inhumanly filled with peace since the old man's death. The returning tenderness of the living came in place of that of the dead, and the child yearned towards his father now with a stronger affection, relieved at last from all his fear. He had been suffered to sit an hour each day beside the bed on which his grandfather lay shrouded, and he had got reconciled to the cold, but silent and happy looks of death. His mother and his Bible told him to obey God without repining in all things; and the child did so with perfect simplicity. One sob had found its way at the close of that pathetic prayer; but the tears that bathed his glistening cheeks were far different from those that, on the day and night of his grandfather's decease, had burst from the agony of a breaking heart. The old minister laid his hand silently upon his golden head—there was a momentary murmur of kindness and pity over the room—the child was pacified—and again all was repose and peace.

A sober voice said that all was ready, and the son and the minister led the way reverently out into the open air. The bier stood before the door, and was lifted slowly up with its sable pall. Silently each mourner took his place. The sun was shining pleasantly, and a gentle breeze passing through the sycamore, shook down the glittering rain-drops upon the funeral velvet. The small procession, with an instinctive spirit, began to move along; and as I cast up my eyes to take a farewell look of that beautiful dwelling, now finally left by him who so long had blessed it, I saw at the half open lattice of the little bed-room window above, the pale weeping face of that stainless matron, who was taking her last passionate farewell of the mortal remains of her father, now slowly receding from her to the quiet field of graves.

We proceeded along the edges of the hills, and along the meadow fields, crossed the old wooden bridge over the burn, now widening in its course to the plain, and in an hour of pensive silence or pleasant talk, we found ourselves entering, in a closer body, the little gateway of the church-yard. To the tolling of the bell we moved across the green mounds, and arranged ourselves, according to the plan and order which our feelings suggested, around the bier and its natural supporters. There was no delay. In a few minutes the ELDER was laid among the mould of his forefathers, in their long ago chosen spot of rest. One by one the people dropt away, and none were left by the new-made grave but the son and his little boy, the pastor and myself. As yet nothing was said, and in that pause I looked around me over the sweet burial-ground.

Each tombstone and grave over which I had often walked in boyhood, arose in my memory, as I looked steadfastly upon their long-forgotten inscriptions; and many had since then been erected. The whole character of the place was still simple and unostentatious, but from the abodes of the dead, I could see that there had been an improvement in the condition of the living.—There was a taste visible in their decorations, not without much of native feeling, and occasionally something even of native grace. If there was any other inscription than the name and age of the poor inhabitants below, it was in general some short text of Scripture; for it is most pleasant and soothing to the pious mind, when bereaved of friends, to commemorate them on earth by some touching expression taken from that book, which reveals to them a life in Heaven.

There is a sort of gradation, a scale of forgetfulness, in a country church-yard, were the processes of nature are suffered to go on over the green place of burial, that is extremely affecting in the contemplation. The soul goes from the grave just covered up, to that which seems scarcely joined together, on and on to those folded and bound by the undisturbed verdure of many, many unremembered years.—It then glides at last into nooks and corners where the ground seems perfectly calm and waveless, utter oblivion having smoothed the earth over the long-mouldered bones. Tombstones on which the inscriptions are hidden in green obliteration, or that are mouldering or falling to a side, are close to others which last week were brushed by the chisel—constant renovation and constant decay—vain attempts to adhere to memory—and oblivion now baffled and now triumphant, smiling among all the memorials of human affection, as they keep continually crumbling away into the world of undistinguishable dust and ashes.

The church-yard to the inhabitants of a rural parish, is the place to which, as they grow older, all their thoughts and feelings turn. The young take a look of it every Sabbath-day, not always perhaps a careless look, but carry away from it, unconsciously, many salutary impressions. What is more pleasant than the meeting of a rural congregation in the church-yard before the minister appears? What is there to shudder at in lying down, sooner or later, in such a peaceful and sacred place, to be spoken of frequently on Sabbath among the groups of which we used to be one, and our low burial-spot to be visited, at such times, as long as there remains on earth any one to whom our face was dear? To those who mix in the strife and dangers of the world, the place is felt to be uncertain wherein they may finally lie at rest. The soldier—the sailor—the traveller, can only see some dim grave dug for him, when he dies, in some place obscure—nameless—and unfixed to imagination. All he feels is that his burial will be—on earth—or in the sea. But the peaceful dwellers who cultivate their paternal acres, or tilling at least the same small spot of soil, shift only from a cottage on the hill-side to one on the plain, still within the bounds of one quiet parish,—they look to lay their bones at last in the



burial-place of the Kirk in which they were baptized, and with them it almost literally is but a step from the cradle to the grave.

Such were the thoughts that calmly followed each other in my reverie, as I stood beside the Elder's grave, and the trodden grass was again lifting up its blades from the pressure of many feet, now all—but a few—departed. What a simple burial had it been! Dust was consigned to dust—no more. Bare, naked, simple, and austere, is in Scotland the service of the grave. It is left to the soul itself to consecrate, by its passion, the mould over which tears, but no words, are poured. Surely there is a beauty in this; for the heart is left unto its own sorrow,—according as it is a friend—a brother—a parent—or a child, that is covered up from our eyes. Yet call not other rites, however different from this, less beautiful or pathetic. For willingly does the soul connect its grief with any consecrated ritual of the dead. Sound or silence—music—hymns—psalms—sable garments, or raiment white as snow, all become holy symbols of the soul's affection; nor is it for any man to say which is the most natural, which is the best of the thousand shows and expressions, and testimonies of sorrow, resignation, and love, by which mortal beings would seek to express their souls when one of their brethren has returned to his parent dust.

My mind was recalled from all these sad yet not unpleasant fancies by a deep groan, and I beheld the Elder's son fling himself down upon the grave, and kiss it passionately, imploring pardon from God. "I distressed my father's heart in his old age—I repented—and received thy forgiveness even on thy death-bed! But how may I be assured that God will forgive me for having so sinned against my old gray-headed father, when his limbs were weak and his eyesight dim?" The old minister stood at the head of the grave, without speaking a word, with his solemn and pitiful eyes fixed upon the prostrate and contrite man. His sin had been great, and tears that till now had, on this day at least, been compressed within his heart by the presence of so many of his friends, now poured down upon the sod as if they would have found their way to the very body of his father. Neither of us offered to lift him up, for we felt awed by the rueful passion of his love, his remorse, and his penitence; and nature, we felt, ought to have her way. "Fear not, my son," at length said the old man, in a gentle voice—"fear not, my son, but that you are already forgiven. Dost thou not feel pardon within thy contrite spirit?" He rose up from his knees with a faint smile, while the minister, with his white head yet uncovered, held his hands over him as in benediction; and that beautiful and loving child, who had been standing in a fit of weeping terror at his father's agony, now came unto him, and kissed his cheek—holding in his little hand a few faded primroses which he had unconsciously gathered together as they lay on the turf of his grandfather's grave.

#### THE TWINS.

THE Kirk of Auchdown stands, with its burial-ground on a little green hill, surrounded by an irregular and straggling village, or rather about a hundred hamlets clustering round it, with their fields and gardens. A few of these gardens come close up to the church-yard wall, and in spring-time many of the fruit-trees hang rich and beautiful over the adjacent graves. The voices and the laughter of the children at play on the green before the parish school, or their composed murmur when at their various lessons together in the room, may be distinctly heard all over the burial-ground—so may the song of the maidens going to the well—while all around, the singing of birds is thick and hurried; and a small rivulet, as if brought there to be an emblem of passing time, glides away beneath the mossy wall, murmuring continually a dream-like tune round the dwellings of the dead.

In the quiet of the evening, after the Elder's funeral, my venerable friend and father took me with him into the church-yard. We walked to the eastern corner, where, as we approached, I saw a monument standing almost by itself, and even at that distance, appeared to be of a somewhat different character from any other over all the burial-ground. And now we stood close to, and before it.

It was a low monument, of the purest white marble, simple, but perfectly elegant and graceful withal, and upon its undorned slab lay the sculptured images of two children asleep in each other's arms. All round it was a small piece of greenest ground, without the protection of any rail, but obviously belonging to the monument. It shone, without offending them, among the simpler or ruder burial beds round about it, and although the costliness of the materials, the affecting beauty of the design, and the delicacy of its execution, all showed that there slept the offspring neither of the poor nor low in life, yet so meekly and sadly did it lift up its unstained little walls, and so well did its unusual elegance meet and blend with the character of the common tombs, that no heart could see it without sympathy, and without owning that it was a pathetic ornament of a place, filled with the ruder memorials of the very humblest dead.

"There lie two of the sweetest children," said the old man, "that ever delighted a mother's soul—two English boys—sons of a noble stem. They were of a decayed family of high lineage; and had they died in their own country a hundred years ago, they would have been let down into a vault with all the pomp of religion. Methinks, fair flowers, they are now sleeping as sweetly here.

"Six years ago I was an old man, and wished to have silence and stillness in my house, that my communion with Him before whom I expected every day to be called might be undisturbed. Accordingly my Manse, that used to ring with boyish glee, was now quiet; when a lady, elegant, graceful, beautiful, young, and a widow, came to my dwelling, and her soft, sweet, silver voice told me that she was from Eng-

land. She was the relict of an officer slain in war, and having heard a dear friend of her husband's, who had lived in my house, speak of his happy and innocent time here, she earnestly requested me to receive beneath my roof her two sons. She herself lived with the bed-ridden mother of her dear husband; and anxious for the growing minds of her boys, she sought to commit them for a short time to my care. They and their mother soon won an old man's heart, and I could say nothing in opposition to her request but that I was upwards of threescore and ten years. But I am living still—and that is their monument."

We sat down, at these words, on the sloping headstone of a grave just opposite to this little beautiful structure, and, without entreaty, and as if to bring back upon his heart the delight of old tender remembrances, the venerable man continued fervently thus to speak:

"The lady left them with me in the Manse—surely the two most beautiful and engaging creatures that ever died in youth. They were twins. Like were they unto each other, as two bright plumed doves of one color, or two flowers with the same blossom and the same leaves. They were dressed alike, and whatever they wore, in that did they seem more especially beautiful. Their hair was the same, a bright auburn—their voices were as one—so that the twins were inseparable in my love, whether I beheld them, or my dim eyes were closed. From the first hour they were left alone with me, and without their mother, in the Manse, did I begin to love them, nor were they slow in returning an old man's affection. They stole up to my side, and submitted their smooth, glossy, leaning heads to my withered and trembling hand, nor for a while could I tell, as the sweet beings came gliding gladsomely near me, which was Edward and which was Henry; and often did they, in loving playfulness, try to deceive my loving heart. But they could not defraud each other of their tenderness; for whatever the one received, that was ready to be bestowed upon the other. To love the one more than the other was impossible.

"Sweet creatures! It was not long before I learned to distinguish them. That which seemed to me at first so perfectly the same, soon unfolded itself into many delightful varieties, and then I wondered how I ever could have mistaken them for one another. Different shadows played upon their hair; that of the one being silky and smooth, and of the other slightly curled at the edges, and clustering thickly when he flung his locks back in playfulness or joy. His eyes, though of a hazel-lue like that of his brother, were considerably lighter, and a smile seemed native there: while those of the other seemed almost dark, and fitter for the mist of tears. Dimples marked the cheeks of the one, but those of the other were paler and smoother. Their voices too, when I listened to them, and knew their character, had a faint fluctuating difference of inflection and tone—like the same instrument blown upon with a somewhat stronger or weaker breath. Their very laugh grew to be different unto my ear—that of the one freer and more frequent, that of the other mild in its utmost glee. And they had not been many days in the Manse, before I knew in a moment, dim as my eyes had long been, the soft, timid, stealing step of Edward, from the dancing and fearless motion of Henry Howard."

Here the old man paused, not, as it seemed, from any fatigue in speaking so long, but as if to indulge more profoundly in his remembrance of the children whom he had so tenderly loved. He fixed his dim eyes on their sculptured images with as fond an expression as if they had been alive, and had laid down there to sleep—and when, without looking on me whom he felt to have been listening with quiet attention, he again began to speak, it was partly to tell the tale of these fair sleepers, and partly to give vent to his loving grief.

"All strangers, even many who thought they knew them well, were pleasantly perplexed with the faces and figures of the bright English twins. The poor beggars, as they went their rounds, blessed them without knowing whether it was Edward or Henry that had bestowed his alms. The mother of the cottage children with whom they played, confused their images in her loving heart, as she named them in her prayers. When only one was present, it gave a start of strange delight to them who did not know the twins, to see another creature, so beautifully the same, come gliding in upon them, and join his brother in a share of their suddenly bestowed affection.

"They soon came to love, with all their hearts, the place wherein they had their new habitation. Not even in their own merry England had their young eyes ever seen brighter green fields,—trees more umbrageous—or, perhaps, even rural gardens more flowery and blossoming than those of this Scottish village. They had lived, indeed, mostly in a town; and in the midst of the freshness and balminess of the country, they became happier and more gleesome—it was said by many, even more beautiful. The affectionate creatures did not forget their mother. Alternately did they write to her every week—and every week did one or other receive from her a letter, in which the sweetest maternal feelings were traced in small delicate lines, that bespoke the hand of an accomplished lady. Their education had not been neglected; and they learnt every thing they were taught with a surprising quickness and docility—alike amiable and intelligent. Morning and evening, too, did they kneel down with clasped hands—these lovely twins even at my feet, and resting on my knees; and melodiously did they murmur together the hymns which their mother had taught them, and passages selected from the Scriptures, many of which are in the affecting, beautiful, and sublime ritual of the English church. And always, the last thing they did, before going to sleep in each other's arms, was to look at their mother's picture, and to kiss it with fond kisses, and many an endearing name."

Just then two birds alighted softly on the white marble

monument, and began to trim their plumes. They were doves from their nest in the belfry of the spire, from which a low, deep, plaintive murmuring was now heard to come, deepening the profound silence of the burial-ground. The two bright birds walked about for a few minutes round the images of the children, or stood quietly at their feet; and then, clapping their wings, flew up and disappeared. The incident, though, at any other time, common and uninteresting, had a strange effect upon my heart now, and seemed dimly emblematic of the innocence and beauty of the inhabitants of that tomb, and of the flight of their sinless souls to heaven.

"One evening in early autumn, (they had been with me from the middle of May,) Edward, the elder, complained, on going to bed, of a sore throat, and I proposed that his brother should sleep in another bed. I saw them myself, accordingly, in separate places of repose.—But on going, about an hour afterwards, into their room, there I found them looked, as usual, in each other's arms—face to face—and their innocent breath mingling from lips that nearly touched. I could not find heart to separate them, nor could I have done so without awaking Edward. His cheeks were red and flushed, and his sleep broken and full of starts. Early in the morning I was at their bed-side. Henry was lying apart from his brother looking at him with a fearful face, and his little arm laid so as to touch his bosom. Edward was unable to rise—his throat was painful, his pulse high, and his heart sick.—Before evening he became slightly delirious, and his illness was evidently a fever of a dangerous and malignant kind. He was, I told you, a bold and gladsome child, when not at his tasks, dancing and singing almost every hour; but the fever quickly subdued his spirit, the shivering fits made him weep and wail, and rueful, indeed, was the change which a single night and day had brought forth.

"His brother seemed to be afraid more than children usually are of sickness, which they are always slow to link with the thought of death. But he told me, weeping, that his eldest brother had died of a fever, and that his mother was always alarmed about that disease. "Did I think," asked he, with wild eyes, and a palpitating heart, "Did I think that Edward was going to die?" I looked at the affectionate child, and taking him to my bosom, I felt that his own blood was beating too too quickly, and that fatal had been that night's sleeping embrace in his brother's bosom. The fever had tainted his sweet veins also—and I had soon to lay him shivering on his bed.—In another day he too was delirious—and too plainly chasing his brother into the grave.

"Never in the purest hours of their healthful happiness had their innocent natures seemed to me more beautiful than now in their delirium. As it increased, all vague fears of dying left their souls, and they kept talking as if to each other of every thing here or in England that was pleasant and interesting. Now and then they murmured the names of persons of whom I had not formerly heard them speak—friends who had been kind to them before I had known of their existence, and servants in their mother's or their father's household. Of their mother they spoke to themselves, though necessarily kept apart, almost in the very same words, expecting a visit from her at the Manse, and then putting out their little hands to embrace her. All their innocent plays were acted over and over again on the bed of death.—They were looking into the nests of the little singing birds, which they never injured, in the hedge-rows and the woods. And the last intelligible words that I heard Edward utter were these—'Let us go brother, to the church-yard, and lie down on the daisies among the little green mounds.'"

"They both died within an hour of each other. I lifted up Henry, when I saw he too was dead, and laid him down beside his brother. There lay the twins, and had their mother at that hour come into the room, she would have been thankful to see that sight, for she would have thought that her children were in a calm and refreshing sleep!"

My eyes were fixed upon the sculptured images of the dead—lying side by side, with their faces up to heaven, their little hands folded as in prayer upon their bosoms, and their eyelids closed. The old man drew a sigh almost like a sob, and wept. They had been intrusted to his care—they had come smiling from another land—for one summer they were happy—and then disappeared, like the other fading flowers, from the earth. I wished that the old man would cease his touching narrative—both for his sake and my own. So I rose, and walked up quite close to the monument, inspecting the spirit of its design, and marking the finish of its execution. But he called me to him, and requesting me to resume my seat beside him on the gravestone, he thus continued:

"I had written to their mother in England that her children were in extreme danger, but it was not possible that she could arrive in time to see them die, not even to see them buried. Decay was fast preying upon them, and the beauty of death was beginning to disappear. So we could not wait the arrival of their mother, and their grave was made. Even the old gray-headed sexton wept, for in this case of mortality there was something to break in upon the ordinary tenor of his thoughts, and to stir up in his heart feelings that he could not have known existed there. There was sadness indeed over all the parish for the fair English twins, who had come to live in the Manse after all the other boys had left it, and who, as they were the last, so were they the loveliest of all my flock. The very sound or accent of their southern voices, so pretty and engaging to our ears in the simplicity of childhood, had won many a heart, and touched, too, the imagination of many with a new delight; and therefore, on the morning when they were buried, it may be said there was here a fast-day of grief.

"The dead children were English—in England had all their ancestors been born; and I knew, from the little I had seen of the mother, that though she had brought her mind to confide her children to the care of a Scottish minister in their

tender infancy, she was attached truly and deeply to the ordinances of her own church. I felt that it would be accordant with her feelings, and that afterwards she would have satisfaction in the thought, that they should be buried according to the form of the English funeral service. I communicated this wish to an Episcopal clergyman in the city, and he came to my house. He arranged the funeral, as far as possible in the circumstances, according to that service; and although, no doubt, there was a feeling of curiosity mingled in many minds with the tenderness and awe which that touching and solemn ceremonial awakened, yet it was witnessed, not only without any feelings of repugnance or scorn, but, I may in truth say, with a rational sympathy, and with all the devout emotions embodied in language so scriptural and true to nature.

"The bier was carried slowly aloft upon men's shoulders, towards the church-yard gate. I myself walked at their little heads. Some of the neighboring gentry—my own domestics—a few neighbors—and some of the school-children, formed the procession. The latter walking before the coffin, continued singing a funeral psalm all the way till we reached the church-yard gate.—It was a still gentle autumnal day, and now and then a withered leaf came rustling across the path of the weeping choristers. To us, to whom that dirge-like strain was new, all seemed like a pensive, and mournful, and holy dream.

"The clergyman met the bier at the gate, and preceded it into the Kirk. It was then laid down—and while all knelt—I keeping my place at the heads of the sweet boys—he read, beautifully, affecting, and solemnly,—a portion of the funeral service. The children had been beloved and admired, while alive, as the English twins, and so had they always been called; and that feeling of their having belonged, as it were, to another country, not only justified but made pathetic to all now assembled upon their knees, the ritual employed by that church to which they, and their parents, and all their ancestors, had belonged. A sighing—and a sobbing too, was heard over the silence of my Kirk, when the clergyman repeated these words, "As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass.

"In the morning it is green and growth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered."

While the old man was thus describing their burial, the clock in the steeple struck, and he paused a moment at the solemn sound. Soon as it had slowly told the hour of advancing evening, he arose from the gravestone, as if his mind sought a relief from the weight of tenderness, in a change of bodily position. We stood together facing the little monument—and his narrative was soon brought to a close.

"We were now all collected together round the grave. The silence of yesterday, at the Elder's funeral, was it not felt by you to be agreeable to all our natural feelings? So were the words which were now spoken over these children. The whole ceremony was different, but it touched the very same feelings in our hearts. It lent an expression, to what, in that other case, was willing to be silent. There was a sweet, a sad, and a mournful consistency in the ritual of death, from the moment we receded from the door of the Manse, accompanied by the music of that dirge sung by the clear tremulous voices of the young and innocent, till we entered the Kirk with the coffin to the sound of the priest's chanted verses from Job and St. John, during the time when we knelt round the dead children in the House of God, also during our procession thence to the grave side, still attended with chanting, or reciting, or responding voices; and finally, at the moment of dropping of a piece of earth upon the coffin, (it was from my own hand,) while the priest said, "We commit their bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Next day their mother arrived at the Manse. She knew before she came that her children were dead and buried. It is true that she wept; and at the first sight of their grave, for they both lay in one coffin, her grief was passionate and bitter. But that fit soon passed away. Her tears were tears of pity for them, but as for herself, she hoped that she was soon to see them in Heaven. Her face pale, yet flushed—her eyes hollow, yet bright, and a general languor and lassitude over her whole frame, all told that she was in the first stage of a consumption. This she knew and was happy. But other duties called her back to England for the short remainder of her life. She herself drew the design of that monument with her own hand, and left it with me when she went away. I soon heard of her death. Her husband lies buried near Grenada, in Spain; she lies in the chancel of the cathedral of Salisbury, in England; and there sleep her twins in the little burial-ground of Auchdown, a Scottish parish."

#### THE POOR SCHOLAR.

The vernal weather, that had come so early in the year, as to induce a fear that it would not be lasting, seemed, contrary to that foreboding of change, to become every day more mild and genial; and the spirit of beauty, that had at first ventured out over the bosom of the earth with timid footsteps, was now blending itself more boldly with the deep verdure of the ground, and the life of the budding trees. Something in the air, and in the great, wide, blue, bending arch of the unclouded sky, called upon the heart to come forth from the seclusion of parlor or study, and partake of the cheerfulness of nature.

We had made some short excursions together up the lonely glens, and over the moors, and also through the more thickly inhabited field-farms of his parish, and now the old

minister proposed that we should pay a visit to a solitary hut near the head of a dell, which, although not very remote from the Manse, we had not yet seen. And I was anxious that we should do so, as, from his conversation, I understood that we should see there a family—if so a widow and her one son could be called—that would repay us by the interest we could not fail to feel in their character, for the time and toil spent on reaching their secluded and guarded dwelling.

"The poor widow woman," said the minister, who lives in the hut called Braehead, has as noble a soul as ever tenanted a human bosom. One earthly hope alone has she now—but I fear it never will be fulfilled. She is the widow of a common cottar who lived and died in the hut which she and her son now inhabit. Her husband was a man of little education, but intelligent, even ingenious, simple, laborious, and pious. His duties lay all within a narrow circle, and his temptations, it may be said, were few. Such as they were, he discharged the one and withstood the other. Nor is there any reason to think that he had both been greater, he would have been found wanting. He was contented with meal and water all his days; and so fond of work, that he seemed to love the summer chiefly for the length of its laboring days. He had a slight genius for mechanics; and during the long winter evenings, he made many articles of curious workmanship, the sale of which added a little to the earnings of his severer toil. The same love of industry excited him from morning to night; but he had also stronger, tenderer, and dearer motives; for his wife and their one pretty boy should outlive him, he hoped that, though left poor, they would not be left in penury, but enabled to lead, without any additional hardships, the usual life, at least, of the widow and the orphan of honest hard-working men. Few thought much about Abraham Blane while he lived, except that he was an industrious and blameless man; but on his death, it was felt that there had been something far more valuable in his character; and now I myself, who knew him well, was pleasantly surprised to know that he had left his widow and boy a small independence. Then the memory of his long summer days, and long winter nights, all ceaselessly employed in some kind of manual labor, dignified the lowly and steadfast virtue of the unpretending and conscientious man.

"The widow of this humble-hearted and simple-minded man, whom we shall this forenoon visit, you will remember, perhaps, although then neither she nor her husband were much known in the parish, as the wife of the basket-maker. Her father had been a clergyman—but his stipend was one of the smallest in Scotland, and he died in extreme poverty. This, his only daughter, who had many fine feelings and deep thoughts in her young, innocent, and simple heart, was forced to become a menial servant in a farm-house. There subduing her heart to her situation, she married that inoffensive and good man; and all her life has been—maid, wife, and widow,—the humblest among the humble. But you shall soon have an opportunity of seeing what sense, what feeling, what knowledge, and what piety, may all live together, without their owner suspecting them, in the soul of the lonely widow of a Scottish cottar; for, except that she is pious, she thinks not that she possesses any other treasure; and even her piety she regards, like a true Christian, as a gift bestowed.

"But well worthy of esteem, and, to speak in the language of this world's fancies, of admiration, as you will think this poor solitary widow, perhaps you will think such feelings bestowed even more deservedly on her only son. He is now a boy only of sixteen years of age, but, in my limited experience of life, never knew I such another. From his veriest infancy he showed a singular capacity for learning; at seven years of age he could read, write, and was even an arithmetician. He seized upon books with the same avidity with which children in general seize upon playthings. He soon caught glimmerings of the meaning even of other languages; and before he was ten years old, there were in his mind clear dawning of the scholar, and indications not to be doubted of genius and intellectual power. His father was dead—but his mother, who was no common woman, however common her lot, saw with pure delight, and with strong maternal pride, that God had given her an extraordinary child to bless her solitary hut. She vowed to dedicate him to the ministry, and that all her husband had left should be spent upon him to the last farthing, to qualify him to be a preacher of God's word.—Such ambition, if sometimes misplaced, is almost always necessarily honorable. Here it was justified by the excellent talents of the boy—by his zeal for knowledge—which was like a fever in his blood—and by a childish piety, of which the simple, and eloquent, and beautiful expression has more than once made me shed tears. But let us leave the Manse and walk to Braehead. The sunshine is precious at this early season; let us enjoy it while it smiles."

We crossed a few fields—a few coppice woods—an extensive sheep pasture, and then found ourselves on the edge of a moor-land. Keeping the shelving heather ridge of hills above us, we gently descended into a narrow rushy glen, without any thing that could be called a stream, but here and there crossed and intersected by various runlets. Soon all cultivation ceased, and no houses were to be seen. Had the glen been a long one, it would have seemed desolate, but on turning round a little green mound that ran almost across it, we saw at once an end to our walk, and one hut, with a peat-stack close to it, and one or two older, or, as we call them in Scotland, *bourrie* bushes, at the low gable-end. A little smoke seemed to tinge the air over the roof uncertainly—but except in that, there was nothing to tell that the hut was inhabited. A few sheep lying near it, and a single cow of the small hill-bred, seemed to appertain to the hut, and a circular wall behind it apparently enclosed a garden. We sat down together on one of those large mossy stones that often

lie among the smooth green pastoral hills, like the relics of some building utterly decayed; and my venerable friend, whose solemn voice was indeed pleasant in this quiet solitude, continued the simple history of the Poor Scholar.

"At school he soon outstripped all the other boys, but no desire of superiority over his companions seemed to actuate him—it was the pure native love of knowledge. Gentle as a lamb, but happy as a lark, the very wildest of them all loved Isaac Blane. He procured a Hebrew Bible and a Greek Testament, both of which he taught himself to read. It was more than affecting—it was sublime and awful to see the solitary boy sitting by himself on the braes shedding tears over the mysteries of the Christian faith. His mother's heart burned within her towards her son; and if it was pride, you will allow that it was pride of a divine origin. She appeared with him in the Kirk every Sabbath, dressed not ostentatiously, but still in a way that showed she intended him not for a life of manual labor. Perhaps at first some half thought that she was too proud of him; but that was a suggestion not to be cherished, for all acknowledged that he was sure to prove an honor to the parish in which he was born. She often brought him to the Manse, and earth did not contain a happier creature than her, when her boy answered all my questions, and modestly made his own simple, yet wise remarks on the sacred subjects gradually unfolding before his understanding and his heart.

"Before he was twelve years of age he went to College—and his mother accompanied him to pass the winter in the city. Two small rooms she took near the cathedral, and while he was at the classes, or reading alone, she was not idle, but strove to make a small sum to help to defray their winter expenses. To her that retired cell was a heaven when she looked upon her pious and studious boy. His genius was soon conspicuous; for four winters he pursued his studies in the university—returning always in summer to this hut, the door of which during their absence was closed. He made many friends, and frequently, during the three last summers, visitors came to pass a day at Braehead, in a rank of life far above his own. But in Scotland, thank God, talent, and learning, and genius, and virtue, when found in the poorest hut, go not without their admiration and their reward. Young as he is, he has had pupils of his own—his mother's little property has not been lessened at this hour by his education—and besides contributing to the support of her and himself, he has brought nether furniture into that lonely hut, and there has a library, limited in the number, but rich in the choice of books, such as contain food for years of silent thought to the Poor Scholar—if years indeed are to be his on earth."

We rose to proceed onwards to the hut, across one smooth level of greenest herbage, and up one intervening knoll a little lower than the mound on which it stood. Why, thought I, has the old man always spoken of the Poor Scholar, as if he had been speaking of one now dead? Can it be, from the hints he has dropped, that this youth, so richly endowed, is under the doom of death, and the fountain of all those clear and fresh gushing thoughts about to be sealed? I asked, as we walked along, if Isaac Blane seemed marked out to be one of those sweet flowers "no sooner blown than blasted," and who perish away like the creatures of a dream? The old man made answer that it was even so—that he had been unable to attend College last winter—and that it was to be feared that he was now far advanced in a hopeless decline. Simple is he still as a very child—but with a sublime sense of duty to God and man—of profound affection and humanity never to be appeased towards all the brethren of our race. Each month—each week—each day has seemed visibly to bring him new stores of silent feeling and thought—and even now, boy as he is, he is fit for the ministry. But he has no hopes of living to that day—nor have I. The deep spirit of his piety is now blended with a sure prescience of an early death.—Expect, therefore, to see him pale—emaciated—and sitting in the hut like a beautiful and blessed ghost."

We entered the hut, but no one was in the room. The clock ticked softly—and on a table, beside a nearly extinguished peat fire, lay the open Bible, and a small volume, which, on lifting it up, I found to be a Greek Testament. "They have gone out to walk, or to sit down for an hour in the warm sunshine," said the old man—"Let us sit down and wait their return. It will not be long." A long low sigh was heard in the silence, proceeding, as it seemed, from a small room adjoining that in which we were sitting, and of which the door was left half open. The minister looked into that room, and after a long earnest gaze, softly stepped back to me again, with a solemn face, and taking me by the hand, whispered to me to come with him to that door, which he gently moved. On a low bed lay the Poor Scholar, dressed as he had been for the day, stretched out in a stiffness too motionless and profound for sleep, and with his fixed face up to Heaven. We saw that he was dead. His mother was kneeling with her face on the bed, and covered with both her hands. Then she lifted up her eyes and said, "O Merciful Redeemer, who wrought that miracle on the child of the widow of Naim, comfort me, in this my sore distress! I know that my son is never to rise again until the great Judgment-day. But not the less do I bless thy holy name—for thou didst die to save us sinners!"

She arose from her knees, and, still blind to every other object, went up to his breast. "I thought thee lovelier, when alive, than any of the sons of the children of men—but that smile is beyond the power of a mother's heart to sustain." And stooping down, she kissed his lips, and cheeks, and eyes, and forehead, with a hundred soft, streaming, and murmuring kisses, and then stood up in her solitary hut, alone and childless, with a long mortal sigh, in which all earthly feelings seemed breathed out, and all earthly ties broken. Her eyes wandered towards the door, and fixed



themselves with a ghastly and unconscious gaze for a few moments on the gray locks and withered countenance of the old holy man, bent towards her with a pitying and benignant air, and stooped, too, in the posture of devotion. She soon recognized the best friend of her son, and leaving the bed on which his body lay, she came into the room, and said, "You have come to me at a time when your presence was sorely needed. Had you been here but a few moments sooner, you would have seen my Isaac die!"

Unconsciously we were all seated; and the widow turning fervently to her venerated friend, said, "He was reading the Bible—he felt faint—and said feebly, 'Mother, attend me to my bed, and when I lie down, put your arm over my breast and kiss me.' I did just as he told me; and on wiping away a tear or two vainly shed by me on my dear boy's face, I saw that his eyes, though open, moved not, and that the lids were fixed. He had gone to another world. See—Sir! there is the Bible lying open at the place he was reading—God preserve my soul from repining—only a few, few minutes ago."

The minister took the Bible on his knees, and laying his right hand, without selection, on part of one of the pages that lay open, he read aloud the following verses:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The mother's heart seemed to be deeply blest for a while by these words. She gave a grateful smile to the old man, and sat silent, moving her lips. At length she again broke forth:

"Oh! Death, whatever may have been our thoughts or fears, ever comes unexpectedly at last! My son often—often told me, that he was dying, and I saw that it was so ever since Christmas. But how could I prevent hope from entering my heart? His sweet happy voice—the calmness of his prayers—his smiles, that never left his face whenever he looked or spoke to me—his studies, still pursued as anxiously as ever—the interest he took in any little incident of our retired life—all forced me to believe at times that he was not yet destined to die. But why think on all these things now? Yes! I will always think of them, till I join him and my husband in Heaven!"

It seemed as now as if the widow had only noticed me for the first time. Her soul had been so engrossed with its passion of grief, and with the felt sympathy and compassion of my venerable friend. She asked me if I had known her son; and I answered, that if I had, I could not have sat there so composedly, but that I was no stranger to his incomparable excellence, and felt indeed for her grievous loss. She listened to my words, but did not seem to hear them, and once more addressed the old man. "He suffered much sickness, my poor boy. For although it was a consumption, that is not always an easy death. But soon as the sickness and the racking pain gave way to our united prayers, God and our Saviour made us happy, and sure he spake then as never mortal spake, kindling into a happiness that was beautiful to see, when I beheld his face marked by dissolution, and knew even in those inspired moments, for I can call them nothing else, that ere long the dust was to lie on those lips now flowing over with heavenly music!"

We sat for some hours in the widow's hut, and the minister several times prayed with her, at her own request. On rising to depart, he said that he would send up one of her dearest friends to pass the night with her, and help her to do the last offices to her son. But she replied that she wished to be left alone for that day and night, and would expect her friend in the morning. We went towards the outer door, and she, in a sort of a sudden stupor, let us depart without any farewell words, and retired into the room where her son was lying. Casting back our eyes, before our departure, we saw her steal into the bed beside the dead body, and drawing the head gently into her bosom, she lay down with him in her arms, and as if they had in that manner fallen asleep.

#### THE FORGERS.

"LET US sit down on this stone seat," said my aged friend, the pastor, "and I will tell you a tale of tears, concerning the last inhabitants of yonder solitary house, just visible on the hill-side, through the gloom of those melancholy pines. Ten years have passed away since the terrible catastrophe of which I am about to speak; and I know not how it is, but methinks, whenever I come into this glen, there is something awful in its silence, while the common sounds of nature seem to my mind dirge-like and forlorn. Was not this very day bright and musical as we walked across all the other hills and valleys; but now a dim mist overspreads the sky, and, beautiful as this lonely place must in truth be, there is a want of life in the verdure and the flowers, as if they grew beneath the darkness of perpetual shadows."

As the old man was speaking, a female figure, bent with age and infirmity, came slowly up the bank below us with a pitcher in her hand, and when she reached a little well, dug out of a low rock all covered with moss and lichens, she seemed to fix her eyes upon it as in a dream, and gave a long, deep, broken sigh.

"The names of her husband and her only son, both dead, are chiselled by their own hands on a smooth stone within the arch of that fountain, and the childless widow at this moment sees nothing on the face of the earth but a few letters not yet overgrown with the creeping time-stains. See! her pale lips are moving in prayer, and, old as she is, and long resigned in her utter hopelessness, the tears are not yet all shed or dried up within her broken heart—a few big drops are on her withered cheeks, but she feels them not, and is unconsciously weeping with eyes that old age has of itself enough bedimmed."

The figure remained motionless beside the well; and though I knew not the history of the griefs that stood all embodied so mournfully before me, I felt that they must have been gathering together for many long years, and that such sighs as I had now heard came from the uttermost desolation of the human heart. At last she dipped her pitcher in the water, lifted her eyes to Heaven, and, distinctly saying, "O Jesus, Son of God! whose blood was shed for sinners, be merciful to their souls!" she turned away from the scene of her sorrow, and, like one seen in a vision, disappeared.

"I have beheld the childless widow happy," said the pastor, "even her who sat alone, with none to comfort her, on a floor swept by the hand of death of all its blossoms. But her whom we have now seen I dare not call happy, even though she puts her trust in God and her Saviour. Hers is an affliction which faith itself cannot assuage. Yet religion may have softened even sighs like those, and, as you shall hear, it was religion that set her free from the horrid dreams of madness, and restored her to that comfort which is always found in the possession of a reasonable soul."

There was not a bee roaming near us, nor a bird singing in the solitary glen, when the old man gave me these hints of a melancholy tale. The sky was black and lowering, as it lay on the silent hills, and enclosed us from the far-off world, in a sullen spot that was felt to be sacred unto sorrow. The figure which had come and gone with a sigh was the only dweller here; and I was prepared to hear a doleful history of one left alone to commune with a broken heart in the cheerless solitude of nature.

"That house, from whose chimneys no smoke has ascended for ten long years," continued my friend, "once showed its windows bright with cheerful fires; and her whom we now saw so wo-begone, I remember brought home a youthful bride, in all the beauty of her joy and innocence. Twenty years beheld her a wife and a mother, with all their most perfect happiness, and with some, too, of their inevitable griefs. Death passed not by her door without his victims, and, of five children, all but one died, in infancy, childhood, or blooming youth. But they died in nature's common decay—peaceful prayers were said around the bed of peace; and when the flowers grew upon their graves, the mother's eyes could bear to look on them, as she passed on with an unaching heart into the house of God. All but one died, and better had it been if that one had never been born."

"Father, mother, and son, now come to man's estate, survived, and in the house there was peace. But suddenly poverty fell upon them. The dishonesty of a kinsman, of which I need not state the particulars, robbed them of their few hereditary fields, which now passed into the possession of a stranger. They, however, remained as tenants in the house which had been their own; and for a while, father and son bore the change of fortune seemingly undismayed, and toiled as common laborers on the soil still dearly beloved. At the dawn of light they went out together, and at twilight they returned. But it seemed as if their industry was in vain. Year after year the old man's face became more deeply furrowed, and more seldom was he seen to smile; and his son's countenance, once bold and open, was now darkened with anger and dissatisfaction. They did not attend public worship so regularly as they used to do; when I met them in the fields, or visited them in their dwelling, they looked on me coldly, and with altered eyes; and I grieved to think how soon they both seemed to have forgotten the blessings Providence had so long permitted them to enjoy, and how sullenly they now struggled with its decrees. But something worse than poverty was now disturbing both their hearts."

"The unhappy old man had a brother who at this time died, leaving an only son, who had for many years abandoned his father's house, and of whom all tidings had long been lost. It was thought by many that he had died beyond seas; and none doubted that, living or dead, he had been disinherited by his stern and unrelenting parent. On the day after the funeral, the old man produced his brother's will, by which he became heir to all his property except an annuity to be paid to the natural heir, should he ever return. Some pitied the prodigal son, who had been disinherited—some blamed the father—some envied the good fortune of those who had so ill borne adversity. But in a short time the death, the will, and the disinherited, were all forgotten, and the lost lands being redeemed, peace, comfort, and happiness, were supposed again to be restored to the dwelling from which they had so long been banished."

"But it was not so. If the furrows on the old man's face were deep before, when he had to toil from morning to night, they seemed to have sunk into more ghastly trenches, now that the goodness of Providence had restored a gentle shelter to his declining years. When seen wandering through his fields at even-tide, he looked not like the patriarch musing tranquilly on the works and ways of God; and when my eyes met his during divine service, which he now again attended with scrupulous regularity, I sometimes thought they were suddenly averted in conscious guilt, or closed in hypocritical devotion. I scarcely know if I had any suspicion against him in my mind or not; but his high bald head, thin silver hair, and countenance with its fine features so intelligent, had no longer the same solemn expression which they once possessed, and something dark and hidden seemed now to belong to them, which withstood his forced and unnatural smile. The son, who, in the days of their former prosperity, had been stained by no vice, and who, during their harder lot, had kept himself aloof from all his former companions, now became dissolute and profligate, nor did he meet with any reproof from a father whose heart would once have burst asunder at one act of wickedness in his beloved child."

"About three years after the death of his father, the disinherited son returned to his native parish. He had been a sailor on board various ships on foreign stations—but hearing

by chance of his father's death, he came to claim his inheritance. Having heard, on his arrival, that his uncle had succeeded to the property, he came to me, and told me, that the night before he left his home, his father stood by his bed-side, kissed him, and said, that never more would he own such an undutiful son—but that he forgave him all his sins—at death would not defraud him of the pleasant fields that had so long belonged to his humble ancestors—and hoped to meet reconciled in heaven. 'My uncle is a villain,' said he, fiercely, 'and I will cast anchor on the green bank where I played when a boy, even if I must first bring his gray head to the scaffold!'

"I accompanied him to the house of his uncle. It was a dreadful visit. The family had just sat down to their frugal mid-day meal; and the old man, though for some years he could have had little heart to pray, had just lifted up his hand to ask a blessing. Our shadows, as we entered the door, fell upon the table—and turning his eyes, he beheld before him on the floor the man whom he fearfully hoped had been buried in the sea. His face indeed, at that moment, most unlike that of prayer, but he still held up his lean shrivelled, trembling hand—'Accursed hypocrite,' cried the fierce mariner, 'dost thou call down the blessing of God on a meal won basely from the orphan? But lo! God, whom thou hast blasphemed, has sent me from the distant isles of the ocean, to bring thy white head into the hangman's hands!'

"For a moment all was silent—then a loud stifled gasping was heard, and she whom you saw a little while ago, rose shrieking from her seat, and fell down on her knees at the sailor's feet. The terror of that unforgotten crime, now first revealed to her knowledge, struck her down to the floor. She fixed her bloodless face on his before whom she knelt—she spoke not a single word. There was a sound in her convulsed throat like the death-rattle. 'I forgot the will,' said the son, advancing towards his cousin with a firm step, 'my father could not—I alone am guilty—I alone must die.' The wife soon recovered the power of speech, but it was so unlike her usual voice, that I scarcely thought, at first, the sound proceeded from her white quivering lips. 'As you hope for mercy at the great judgment-day, let the old man make his escape—hush, hush—till within a few days he has sailed away from the hold of some ship to America. You surely will not hang on old gray-headed man of threescore and ten years!'

"The sailor stood silent and frowning. There seemed neither pity nor cruelty in his face; he felt himself injured, and looked resolved to right himself, happen what would. 'I say he has forged my father's will. As to escaping, let him escape if he can. I do not wish to hang him; though I have seen better men run up the foreyard-arm before now, for only asking their own. But no more kneeling, woman—Holla! where is the old man gone?'

"We all looked ghastly around, and the wretched wife and mother, springing to her feet, rushed out of the house. We followed, one and all. The door of the stable was open, and the mother and son entering, loud shrieks were heard. The miserable old man had sunk out of the room unobserved during the passion that had struck all our souls, and had endeavored to commit suicide. His own son cut him down, as he hung suspended from a rafter in that squalid place, and carrying him in his arms, laid him down upon the green bank in front of the house. There he lay with his livid face, and blood-shot protruded eyes, till, in a few minutes, he raised himself up, and fixed them upon his wife, who soon recovering from a fainting fit, came shrieking from the mire in which she had fallen down. 'Poor people!' said the sailor with a gasping voice, 'you have suffered enough for your crime. Fear nothing; the worst is now passed; and rather would I sail the seas twenty years longer, than add another pang to that old man's heart. Let us be kind to the old man.'

"But it seemed as if a raven had croaked the direful secret all over the remotest places among the hills; for, in an hour, people came flocking in from all quarters, and it was seen that concealment or escape was no longer possible, and that father and son were destined to die together a felon's death."

Here the pastor's voice ceased, and I had heard enough to understand the long deep sigh that had come moaning from that bowed-down figure beside the solitary well. "That was the last work done by the father and son, and finished the day before the fatal discovery of their guilt. It had probably been engaged in as a sort of amusement to beguile their unhappy mind of ever-anxious thoughts, or perhaps as a solitary occupation, at which they could unburthen their guilt to one another undisturbed. Here, no doubt, in the silence and solitude, they often felt remorse, perhaps penitence. They chiselled out their names on that slab, as you perceive; and hither, as duly as the morning and evening shadows, comes the ghost whom we beheld, and, after a prayer for the souls of them so tenderly beloved in their innocence, and doubtless even more tenderly beloved in their guilt and in their graves, she carries to her lonely hut the water that helps to preserve her hopeless life, from the well dug by dearest hands, now mouldered away, both flesh and bone, into the dust."

After a moment's silence the old man continued,—for he saw that I longed to hear the details of that dreadful catastrophe, and his own soul seemed likewise desirous of renewing his grief.—"The prisoners were condemned. Hope there was none. It was known, from the moment of the verdict—guilty,—that they would be executed.—Petitions were, indeed, signed by many, many thousands; but it was all in vain,—and the father and the son had to prepare themselves for death."

"About a week after condemnation I visited them in their cell. God forbid I should say that they were resigned. Hu-

man nature could not resign itself to such a doom; and I found the old man pacing up and down the stone-floor, in his clanking chains, with hurried steps, and a countenance of unspeakable horror. The son was lying on his face upon his bed of straw, and had not lifted up his head, as the mazy bolts were withdrawn, and the door creaked sullenly on its hinges. The father fixed his eyes upon me for some time, as if I had been a stranger intruding upon his misery; and, as soon as he knew me, shut them with a deep groan, and pointed to his son.—I have murdered William—I have brought my only son to the scaffold, and I am doomed to hell! I gently called on the youth by name, but he was insensible—he was lying in a fit. 'I fear he will awake out of that fit,' cried the old man with a broken voice. 'They have come upon him every day since our condemnation, and sometimes during the night. It is not fear for himself that brings them on—for my boy, though guilty, is brave—but he continues looking on my face for hours, till at last he seems to lose all sense, and falls down in strong convulsions, often upon the stone floor, till he is all covered with blood.' The old man then went up to his son, knelt down, and, putting aside the thick clustering hair from his forehead, continued kissing him for some minutes, with deep sobs, but eyes dry as dust.

'But why should I recall to my remembrance, or describe to you, every hour of anguish that I witnessed in that cell? For several weeks it was all agony and despair—the Bible lay unheeded before their ghastly eyes—and for them there was no consolation—The old man's soul was filled but with one thought—that he had deluded his son into sin, death, and eternal punishment. He never slept; but visions, terrible as those of sleep, seemed often to pass before him, till I have seen the gray hairs bristle horribly over his temples, and big drops of sweat splash down upon the floor. I sometimes thought that they would both die before the day of execution; but their mortal sorrows, though they sadly changed both face and frame, seemed at last to give a horrible energy to life, and every morning that I visited them, they were stronger, and more broadly awake in the chill silence of their lonesome prison-house.

'I know not how a deep change was at last wrought upon their souls, but two days before that of execution, on entering their cell, I found them sitting calm and composed by each other's side, with the Bible open before them. Their faces, though pale and haggard, had lost that glare of misery, that so long had shone about their restless and wandering eyes, and they looked like men recovering from a long and painful sickness. I almost thought I saw something like a faint smile of hope. 'God has been merciful unto us,' said the father, with a calm voice. 'I must not think that he has forgiven my sins, but he has enabled me to look on my poor son's face—to kiss him—to fold him in my arms—to pray for him—to fall asleep with him in my bosom, as I used often to do in the days of his boyhood, when, during the heat of mid-day, I rested from labor below the trees of my own farm. We have found resignation at last, and are prepared to die.'

'There were no transports of deluded enthusiasm in the souls of these unhappy men. They had never doubted the truth of revealed religion, although they had fatally disregarded its precepts; and now that remorse had given way to penitence, and nature had become reconciled to the thought of inevitable death, the light that had been darkened, but never extinguished in their hearts, rose up anew; and knowing that their souls were immortal, they humbly put their faith in the mercy of their Creator and their Redeemer.

'It was during that resigned and serene hour, that the old man ventured to ask for the mother of his poor unhappy boy. I told him the truth calmly, and calmly he heard it all. On the day of his condemnation, she had been deprived of her reason, and in the house of a kind friend, whose name he blessed, now remained in merciful ignorance of all that had befallen, believing herself, indeed, to be a motherless widow, but one who had long ago lost her husband, and all her children, in the ordinary course of nature. At this recital his soul was satisfied. The son said nothing, but wept long and bitterly.

'The day of execution came at last. The great city lay still as on the morning of the Sabbath-day; and all the ordinary business of life seemed, by one consent of the many thousand hearts beating there, to be suspended. But as the hours advanced, the frequent tread of feet was heard in every avenue; the streets began to fill with pale, anxious, and impatient faces; and many eyes were turned to the dials on the steeples, watching the silent progress of the finger of time, till it should reach the point at which the curtain was to be drawn up from before a most mournful tragedy.

'The hour was faintly heard through the thick prison walls by us, who were together for the last time in the condemned cell. I had administered to them the most awful rite of our religion, and father and son sat together as silent as death. The door of the dungeon opened, and several persons came in. One of them, who had a shrivelled bloodless face, and small red fiery eyes, an old man, feeble and tottering, but cruel in his decrepitude, laid hold of the son with a cord. No resistance was offered; but, straight and untrembling, stood that tall and beautiful youth, while the fiend bound him for execution. At this mournful sight, how could I bear to look on his father's face? Yet neither were mine eyes impelled by the agony that afflicted my commiserating soul. During that hideous gaze he was insensible of the executioner's approach towards himself; and all the time that the cords were encircling his own arms, he felt them not—he saw nothing but his son standing at last before him, ready for the scaffold.

'I dimly recollect a long dark vaulted passage, and the echoing tread of footsteps, till all at once we stood in a crowded hall, with a thousand eyes fixed on these two miserable men. How unlike were they to all beside! They sat down together within the shadow of death. Prayers were said,

and a psalm was sung, in which their voices were heard to join, with tones that wrung out tears from the hardest or the most careless heart. Often had I heard those voices singing in my own peaceful church, before evil had disturbed, or misery broken them;—but the last word of the psalm was sung, and the hour of their departure was come.

'They stood at last upon the scaffold. That long street, that seemed to stretch away interminably from the old prison-house, was paved with uncovered heads, for the moment these ghosts appeared, that mighty crowd felt reverence for human nature so terribly tried, and prayers and blessings, passionately ejaculated, or convulsively stifled, went hovering over all the multitude, as if they feared some great calamity to themselves, and felt standing on the first tremor of an earthquake.

'It was a most beautiful summer's day on which they were led out to die; and as the old man raised his eyes, for the last time, to the sky, the clouds lay motionless on that blue translucent arch, and the sun shone joyously over the magnificent heavens. It seemed a day made for happiness or for mercy. But no pardon dropped down from these smiling skies, and the vast multitude were not to be denied the troubled feast of death. Many who now stood there wished they had been in the heart of some far-off wood or glen; there was shrieking and fainting, not only among maids, and wives, and matrons, who had come there in the mystery of their hearts, but men fell down in their strength,—for it was an overwhelming thing to behold a father and his only son now halted for a shameful death. 'Is my father with me on the scaffold?—give me his hand, for I see him not.' I joined their hands together, and at that moment the great bell in the cathedral tolled, but I am convinced neither of them heard the sound. For a moment there seemed to be no such thing as sound in the world;—and then all at once the multitude heaved like the sea, and uttered a wild yelling shriek. Their souls were in eternity—and I fear not to say, not an eternity of grief.'

#### THE FAMILY-TRYST.

The fire had received an addition of a large ash-root and a heap of peats, and was beginning both to crackle and blaze; the hearth-stone was tidily swept—the supper-table set—and every seat, bench, chair, and stool occupied by its customary owner, except the high-backed, carved, antique open arm-chair belonging exclusively to the good man. Innocence, labor, contentment, and mirth, were here all assembled together in the wide low-roofed kitchen of this sheltered farm-house, called, from its situation in a low woody dell, The How; and all that was wanting to make the happiness complete, was Abel Alison himself, the master and father of the family. It seemed to them that he was rather later than usual in returning from the city, whither he went every market-day. But though it was a boisterous night in April, with a good drift of snow going, they had no apprehensions of his safety; and when they heard the tramping of his horse's feet on the gravel, up sprang half a dozen creatures of various sizes to hail him at the door, and to conduct the colt, for so they continued to call a horse now about fifteen years old, to his fresh-strawed stall in the byre. All was right—Abel entered with his usual smile, his wife helped him off with his great-coat, which had a respectable sprinkling of snow and stiffening of frost; he assumed his usual seat, or, as his youngest son and namesake, who was the wit of the family, called it, his throne, and supper immediately smoking on the board, a blessing was said, and a flourish of wooden spoons ensued.

Supper being over, and a contented silence prevailing, with an occasional whispered mark of merriment or affection circling round, Abel Alison rested himself with more than his usual formality against the back of his chair, and putting on not an unhappy, but a grave face, told his wife and family, and servants, all to make up their minds to hear some very bad news nearly affecting themselves. There was something too anxiously serious in his look, voice, and attitude, to permit a thought of his wishing to startle them for a moment by some false alarm. So at once they were all hushed—youth and old—and turned towards their father with fixed countenances and anxious eyes.

'Wife—and children—there is no need, surely, to go round about the bush—I will tell you the worst in a word. I am ruined. That is to say, all my property is lost—gone—and we must leave the How. There is no help for it—we must leave the How.'

His wife's face grew pale, and for a short space she said nothing. A slight convulsive motion went over all the circle as if they had been one body, or an electric shock had struck them all sitting together with locked hands. 'Leave the How!' one voice sobbing exclaimed—it was a female voice—but it was not repeated, and it was uncertain from whom it came.

'Why Abel,'—said his wife calmly, who had now perfectly recovered herself, 'if we must leave the How, we must leave a bonny sheltered spot where we have seen many happy days. But what then? surely there may be contentment found many a where else besides in this cheerful room, and round about our birken banks and braes. For myself, I shall not lose a night's rest at the thought, if you, Abel, can bear it—and, God bless you, I have known you bear a severer blow than this!'

Abel Alison was a free warm-hearted man, of a happy disposition, and always inclined to look at every thing in a favorable light. He was also a most industrious, hard-working man. But he could not always say 'nay,'—and what he earned with a month's toil he had more than once lost by a moment's easy good-nature. He had, some time before, imprudently become surety for an acquaintance, who had no such rightful claim upon him—that acquaintance was a man

of no principle—and Abel was now ruined—utterly and irretrievably ruined. Under such circumstances, he could not be altogether without self-reproach—and the kind magnanimity of his wife now brought the tear into his eye. 'Ay—ay—I was just the old man in that foolish business. I should have remembered you, Alice—and all my bairns. But I hope—I know you will forgive me—for having thus been the means of bringing you all to poverty.'

Upon this, Abel's eldest son—a young man about twenty years of age, stood up, and first looking with the most respectful tenderness upon his father, and then with a cheerful smile upon all around, said, 'Father, never more utter these words—never more have these thoughts. You have fed us—clothed us—educated us—taught us what is our duty to God and man. It rests with ourselves to practise it. We all love you—Father—we are all grateful—we would all lay down our lives to save yours. But there is no need for that now. What has happened? Nothing! Are we not all well—all strong—cannot we all work? As God is my witness, and knows my heart, I now declare before you, father, that this is not a visitation, but it is a blessing. Now it will be tried whether we love you, father—whether you have prayed every morning and every night for more than twenty years for ungrateful children—whether your toil in sun, and rain, and snow, has been thankless toil—or whether we will not all rally round your gray head, and find it a pleasant shelter—a smooth pillow—and a piteous board?' and with that he unconsciously planted his foot more firmly on the floor, and stretched out his right arm, standing there a tall, straight, powerful stripling, in whom there was visible protection and succor for his parents and their declining age.

One spirit kindled over all—not a momentary flash of enthusiasm, not a mere movement of pity and love towards their father, which might give way to dissimulation and despondency,—but a true, deep, clear reconciliation of their souls to their lot, and a resolution not to be shaken in its unquaking power by any hardships either in anticipation or reality. Abel Alison saw and felt this, and his soul burned within him. 'We shall all go to service—no shame in that. But we shall have time enough to consider all of these points before the term-day. We have some weeks before us at the How—and let us make the most of them. Wife, children, are you all happy?'

'All—all—perfectly happy—happier than ever,' was the general burst of the reply.

'Stir up that fire, my merry little Abel,' said the mother, 'and let us have a good, full, bright blaze on your father's face—God bless him!'

Abel brandished an immense poker in both hands, and after knitting his brows, and threatening to aim a murderous blow on the temples of the beautiful little Alice on her stool close to the ingle, and at her father's feet, a practical joke that seemed infinitely amusing, he gave the great ash-root a thump that sent a thousand sparkling gems up the wide chimney, and then placing the poker under it like a lever, he hoisted up the burning mass, till a blaze of brightness dazzled all their eyes, and made Luath start up from his slumbers on the hearth.

'Come, Alice,' said the father, 'for we must not be cheated out of our music as well as our money—let us have your song as usual, my bonny linnet, something that suits the season, cheerful and mournful at the same time—Auld lang syne, or "Lochaber no more." 'I will sing them both, father, first the one and then the other;—and as her sweet silver pipe trilled plaintively along, now and then other voices, and among them that of old Abel himself, were heard joining in the touching air.

'What think you of the singing this night, my gude dog, Luath?' quoth little cunning Abel, taking the dumb creature's offered paw into his hand. 'But do you know, Luath—your greedy fellow, who has often stolen my cheese and bread on the hill when my head was turned—though you are no thief either, Luath—I say, Sir, do you know that we are all going to be—starved? Come—here is the last mouthful of cake you will ever have all the days of your life—henceforth you must eat grass like a sheep. Hold your nose—Sir—there—one—two—three! Steady—snap—swallow! Well caught! Digest that and be thankful.'

'Children,' said the old man, 'suppose we make a Family-Trust, which, if we be all alive, let us religiously keep—ay—religiously, for it will be a day either of fast or of thanksgiving. Let us all meet on the term-day, that is, I believe, the twelfth of May come a twelvemonth, on the green plat of ground beside the Shaw-Linn, in which we have for so many years washed our sheep. It is a bonny low, quiet spot, where nobody will come to disturb us. We will all meet together before the gloaming, and compare the stories of our year's life and doings, and say our prayers together in the open air, and beneath the moon and stars.' The proposal was joyfully agreed to by all.

Family worship was now performed. Abel Alison prayed as fervently, and with as grateful a heart as he had done the night before. For his piety did not keep an account current of debtor and creditor with God. All was God's—of his own he had nothing. God had chosen to vary to him the mode and place of his few remaining years on earth. Was that a cause for repining? God had given him health, strength, a loving wife, dutiful children, a good conscience. No palsy had stricken him—no fever devoured him—no blindness darkened his path. Only a few gray hairs were as yet sprinkled among the black. His boys could bear being looked at and spoken to in any company, gentle or simple; and his daughters, they were like the water-lilies, that are serene in the calm clear water, but no less serene among the black and scowling waves. So Abel Alison and all his family lay down on their beds; and long before midnight they were all fast asleep.



The time came when the farm—the bonny farm of the How was given up, and another family took possession. Abel's whole stock was taken by the new tenant, who was a good, and honest, and merciful man, at a fair valuation. With the sum thus got, Abel paid all his debts—that large haul one—and his few small ones at the Carpenter's shop, the Smithy, and Widow Anderson's, the green, gray, black, brown, and white grocer of the village; and then he and his family were left without a shilling. Yet none pitied them—they were above pity.—They would all have scorned either to beg or borrow, for many of their neighbors were as poor, and not a great many much richer, than themselves after all; and therefore they set their cheerful faces against the blast, and it was never felt to touch them. The eldest son immediately hired himself at high wages, for his abilities, skill, and strength were well known, as head-servant with the richest farmer in the next parish—which was famous for its agriculture. The second son, who was of an ingenious and thoughtful cast of character, engaged himself as one of the under-gardeners at Pollock-Castle—and the third, Abel the wag, became a shepherd with an old friend of his father's within a few hundred yards of the How.—The eldest daughter went into service in the family of the Laird of Southfield, one of the most respectable in the parish. The second was kindly taken into the Manse as a nurse to the younger children, and a companion to the elder—Alicia, who, from her sweet voice, was always called the Linnet, became a shepherdess along with her brother Abel. The mother went to the Hall to manage the dairy—the baronet being a great man for cheese and butter—and the father lived with her in a small cottage near the Hall-gate, employing himself in every kind of work that offered itself, for he was a neat-handed man, and few things, out of doors or in, came amiss to his fingers, whether it required a delicate touch or a strong blow. Thus were they all settled to their heart's content before the hedge-rows were quite green—and though somewhat scattered, yet were they all within two hours' journey of each other, and their hearts were all as close together as when inhabiting the sweet, low, bird-nest-like cottage of the How.

The year with all its seasons fled happily by—the long warm months of summer, when the night brings coolness rather than the shut of light—the fitful, broken, and tempestuous autumn—the winter, whose short but severe days of toil in the barn, and cheerful fireside-nights, with all their work and all their amusements—soon, too soon, it is often felt, give way to the open weather and active life of spring—the busy, working, enlivening spring itself—were now flown by—and it was now the day of the *Family-Tryst*, the dear twelfth day of the beautiful but capricious month of May.

Had any one died whose absence would damp the joy and hilarity of the *Family-Tryst*, and make it a meeting for the shedding of tears? No. A kind God had counted the beatings of every pulse, and kept the blood of them all in a tranquil flow. The year had not passed by without many happy greetings—they had met often and often—at church—at market—on chance visits at neighbors' houses—and not rarely at the cottage at the Hall-gate. There had been nothing deserving the name of separation. Yet now that the hour of the *Family-Tryst* was near at hand, all their hearts bounded within them, and they saw before them all day that smooth verdant plant, and heard the delightful sound of that waterfall.

The day had been cheerful, both with breezes and with sunshine, and not a rain cloud had shown itself in the sky. Towards the afternoon the wind fell, and nature became more serenely beautiful every minute as the evening was coming on with its silent dews. The parents came first to the *Trysting place*, cheered, as they approached it down the woody den, by the deepening voice of the Shaw-linn. Was that small turf-built altar, and the circular turf-seat that surrounded it, built by fairy hands? They knew at once that some of their happy children had so employed a few leisure evening hours, and they sat down on the little mound with hearts overflowing with silent—perhaps speechless gratitude.

But they sat not long there by themselves—beloved faces, at short intervals, came smiling upon them—one through the coppice-wood, where there was no path—another across the meadow—a third appeared with a gladness shout on the cliff of the waterfall—a fourth seemed to rise out of the very ground before them—and last of all came, preceded by the sound of laughter and of song, with which the calm air was stirred, Abel and Alicia, the fairies who had reared that green grassy altar, and who, from their covert in the shade, had been enjoying the gradual assemblage. "Blessings be to our God—not a head is wanting," said the father, unable to contain his tears—"this night could I die in peace!"

Little Abel and Alicia, who, from their living so near the spot, had taken upon themselves the whole management of the evening's ceremonial, brought forth from a bush where they had concealed them, a basket of bread and cheese, and butter, a jar of milk, and another of honey—and placed them upon the turf—as if they had been a rural gift to some rural deity. "I thought you would be all hungry," said Abel, "after your trudge—and as for Simon, there, the jolly gardener, he will eat all the kibbick kibbick, if I do not keep a sharp eye upon him. Simon was always a sure hand at a meal. But, Alice, reach me over the milk-jar. Ladies and gentlemen, all your very good healths—Our noble selves." This was felt to be very fair wit of Abel's—and there was an end to the old man's tears.

"I vote," quoth Abel, "that every man (beginning with myself, who will be the oldest man among you when I have lived long enough) give an account of himself, and produce whatever of the ready rhino he may have made, found, or stolen, since he left the How. However, I will give way to my father—now for it, father—let us hear if you have been a

good boy." "Will that imp never hold his tongue?" cried the mother, making room for him at the same time on the turf seat by her side—and beckoning him with a smile, which he obeyed, to occupy it.

"Well then," quoth the father, "I have not been sitting with my hands folded, or leaning on my elbows. Among other small matters, I have helped to lay about half a mile of high road on the Macadam plan, across the lang quagmire on the Mearns Muir, so that nobody need be sucked in there again for fifty years to come at the very soonest. With my own single pair of hands I have built about thirty rood of stone-dike five feet high, with two rows of through-stones, connecting Saunders Mill's garden wall with the fence round the Fir Belt. I have delved to some decent purpose on some half score of neighbors' kail-yards, and clipped their hedges round and straight, not forgetting to dock a bit of the tails o' some o' the peacocks and outlandish birds on that queer old-fashioned terrace at Mallets-Hugh. I cannot have mown under some ten braid Scots acres of rye-grass and meadow hay together, but finding my back stiff in the stooping, I was a stooker and a banster on the Corn-rigs. I have threshed a few thrives in the minister's barn—prime oats they were, for the glie had been seven years in lea. I have gone some dozen times to Lismahago for the clear-losing coals, a drive of forty miles back and forward I've warrant it. I have felled and houghed about forty ash-trees, and lent a hand now and then in the saw-pit. I also let some o' the daylight into the fir wood at Hallside, and made a bonny bit winding walk along the burn-side for the young ladies' feet. So, to make a long story short, there is a receipt (clap a bit o' turf on't, Abel, to keep it frae fleecing off the daisies) from the Savings Bank, for 25*l*. 13*s*. signed by Bailie Trumbell's ain hand. That is a sight gude for sair een! Now, Mrs. Alison, for I must give you the title you bear at the Hall, what say you?"

"I have done nothing but superintend the making o' butter and cheese, the one as rich as Dutch, and the other preferable to Stilton. My wages are just fifteen pounds, and there they are. Lay them down beside your father's receipt. But I have more to tell. If ever we are able to take a bit farm of our own again, my Lady has promised to give me the Ayrshire Hawkie, that yields sixteen pints a-day for months at a time, o' real rich milkness. She would bring 20*l*. in any market. So count that 35*l*. my bonny bairns. Speak out, my Willy, no fear but you have a good tale to tell."

"There is a receipt for thirty pounds, lent this blessed day, at five per cent. to auld Laird Shaw—as safe as the ground we tread upon. My wages are forty pounds a-year—as you know—and I have twice got the first prize at the competition o' ploughmen—thanks to you, father, for that. The rest of the money is gone upon fine clothes and upon the bonny lasses on Fair-day. Why should not we have our enjoyments in this world as well as richer folk?" "God bless you, Willy," said the old man; "you would not let me nor your mother part with our Sunday's clothes, when that crash came upon us—though we were willing to do so, to right all our creditors. You become surety for the amount—and you have paid it—I know that. Well—it may not be worth speaking about—but it is worth thinking about, Willy—and a father need not be ashamed to receive a kindness from his own flesh and blood."

"It is my turn now," said Andrew, the young gardener. "There is twelve pounds—and next year it will be twenty. I am to take the flower-garden into my own hand—and let the Paisley florists look after their pinks, and tulips, and anemones, or I know where the prizes will come after this. There's a bunch o' flowers for you, Alice—if you put them in water they will live till the Sabbath-day, and you may put some of them into your bonnet. Father, William said he had to thank you for his ploughmanship—so have I for my gardening. And wide and rich as the flower-garden is that I am to take now under my own hand, do you think I will ever love it better, or as well, as the bit plat on the bank-side, with its bower in the corner, the birks hanging over it without keeping off the sun, and the clear burnie wimpling away at its foot? There I first delved with a small spade o' my ain—you put the shaft in yourself, father—and, trust me, it will be a while before that piece o' wood gangs into the fire."

"Now for my speech," said Abel—"short and sweet is my motto. I like something pithy. Lo and behold a modiwart's skin, with five and forty shillings in silver! It goes to my heart to part with them. Mind, father, I only lend them to you. And if you do not repay them with two shillings and better of interest next May-day, old style, I will put the affair into the hands of scranky Pate Orr, the writer at Thorny-Bank. But, hold—will you give me what is called heritable security? That means land, doesn't it? Well then, turf is land—and I thus fling down the modiwart purse on the turf—and that is lending money on heritable security." A general laugh rewarded this ebullition of genius from Abel, who received such plaudits with a face of cunning solemnity, and then the eldest daughter, meekly took up the word and said—"My wages were nine pounds—there they are!" "Oh! ho," cried Abel, "who gave you, Agnes, that bonny blue spotted silk handkerchief round your neck, and that bonny but gae droll pattern'd gown? You had not these at the How—may be you got them from your sweetheart?"—and Agnes blushed in her innocence like the beautiful flower, "Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue."

The little Nourice from the Manse laid down on the turf without speaking, but with a heartsome smile, her small wages of four pounds—and, last of all, the little fair-haired, blue-eyed, snowy-skinned Alice the shepherdess, with motion soft as light, and with a voice sweet as an air harp, placed her wages too beside the rest—"There is a golden guinea—it is to be two next year, and so on till I am fifteen. Every little helps." And her father took her to his heart, and kissed her

glistering ringlets, and her smiling eyes, that happily shut beneath the touch of his loving lips.

By this time the sun had declined—and the sweet sober gloaming was about to melt into the somewhat darker beauty of a summer night. The air was now still and silent, as if unseen creatures that had been busy there had all gone to rest. The mavis, that had been singing loud and mellow, and clear, on the highest point of a larch, now and then heard by the party in their happiness, had flitted down to be near his mate on her nest within the hollow root of an old ivy-wreathed yew-tree. The snow-white coney looked out from the coppice, and bending his long ears towards the laughing scene, drew back unstartled into the thicket. "Nay—nay—Luath," whispered Abel, patting his dog, that was between his knees, "you must not kill the poor bit white rabbit. But if a maunkin would show herself, I would let thee take a brattle after her through the wood. For she could only cock her fud at a' thy yelping, and land thee in a net o' briars to scratch thy hide and tangle thy tail in. You canna catch a maunkin—Luath—they're over soople for you, you fat lary tyke."

The old man now addressed his children with a fervent voice, and told them that their dutiful behavior to him, their industrious habits, their moral conduct in general, and their regard to their religious duties, all made them a blessing to him, for which he never could be sufficiently thankful to the Giver of all mercies. "Money," said he, "is well called the root of all evil—but not so now. There it lies—upon that turf—an offering from poor children to their poor parents. It is a beautiful sight, my bairns—but your parents need it not. They have enough. May God for ever bless you—my dear bairns. That night at the How, I said this meeting would be either a fast or a thanksgiving; and that we would praise God with a prayer, and also the voice of psalms. No house is near—no path by which any one will be coming at this quiet hour. So let us worship our Maker—here is the Bible."

"Father," said the eldest son, "will you wait a few minutes—for I am every moment expecting two dear friends to join us? Listen, I hear footsteps, and the sound of voices round the corner of the coppice. They are at hand."

A beautiful young woman, dressed almost in the same manner as a farmer's daughter, but with a sort of sylvan grace about her, that seemed to denote a somewhat higher station, now appeared, along with a youth, who might be her brother. Kindly greetings were interchanged, and room being made for them, they formed part of the circle round the altar of turf. A sweet surprise was in the hearts of the party at this addition to their number, and every face brightened with a new delight. "That is bonny Sally Mather of the Burn-House," whispered little Alice to her brother Abel. "She passed me as day on the brae, and made me the present of a comb for my hair, you ken, when you happened to be on the other side of the wood. Oh! Abel, has not she the bonniest and the sweetest een that ever you saw smile?"

This young woman, who appeared justly so beautiful in the eyes of little Alice, was even more so in those of her eldest brother. She was sitting at his side, and the wide earth did not contain two happier human beings than these humble, virtuous, and sincere lovers. Sally Mather was the beauty of the parish; and she was also an heiress, or rather now the owner of the Burn-House, a farm worth about a hundred a-year, and one of the pleasantest situations in a parish remarkable for the picturesque and romantic character of its scenery. She had received a much better education than young women generally do in her rank of life, her father having been a common farmer, but, by successful skill and industry, having been enabled, in the decline of life, to purchase the farm which he had improved to such a pitch of beautiful cultivation. Her heart William Alison had won—and now she had been for some days betrothed to him as his bride. He now informed his parents, and his brothers and sisters of this; and proud was he, and, better than proud, when they all bade God bless her, and when his father and mother took her each by the hand, and kissed her, and wept over her in the fulness of their exceeding joy.

"We are to be married at midsummer; and, father and mother, before the winter sets in, there shall be a dwelling ready for you, not quite so roomy as our old house at the How, but a bonny bield for you, I hope, for many a year to come. It is not a quarter of a mile from our own house, and we shall not charge you a high rent for it and the two or three fields about it. You shall be a farmer again, father, and no fear of ever being turned out again, be the lease short or long."

Fair Sally Mather joined her lover in this request with her kindly smiling eyes, and what greater happiness could there be to such parents than to think of passing the remainder of their declining life near such a son, and such a pleasant being as their new daughter? "Abel and I," cried little Alice, unable to repress her joyful affection, "will live with you again—I will do all the work about the house that I am strong enough for, and Abel, you ken, is as busy as the unwearied bee, and will help my father about the fields, better and better every year. May we come home to you from service, Abel and I?" "Are you not happy enough where you are?" asked the mother—"with a loving voice." "Happy or not happy," quoth Abel, "home we come at the term, as sure as that is the cuckoo. Harken how the dunces keeps repeating his own name, as if any body did not know it already. Yonder he goes—with his titling at his tail—people talk of the cuckoo never being seen—why, I cannot open my eyes without seeing either him or his wife. Well, as I was saying—father—home Alice and I come at the term. Pray, what wages?"

But what brought the young Laird of Southfield here? thought the mother—while a dim and remote suspicion, too pleasant, too happy, to be true, passed across her maternal heart. Her sweet Agnes was a servant in his father's house

—and though that father was a laird, and lived on his own land, yet he was in the very same condition of life as her husband, Abel Alison—they had often sat at each other's table—and her bonny daughter was come of an honest kind, and would not disgrace any husband either in his own house, or a neighbor's, or in his seat in the Kirk. Such passing thoughts were thickening in the mother's breast, and perhaps not wholly unknown also to the father's, when the young man, looking towards Agnes, who could not lift up her eyes from the ground, said, "My father is willing and happy that I should marry the daughter of Abel Alison. For he wishes me no other wife than the virtuous daughter of an honest man. And I will be happy—if Agnes make as good a wife as her mother."

A perfect blessedness now filled the souls of Abel Alison and his wife. One year ago, and they were, what is called, utterly ruined—they put their trust in God—and now they received their reward. But their pious and humble hearts did not feel it to be a reward, for in themselves they were conscious of no desert. The joy came from Heaven, undeserved by them, and with silent thanksgiving and adoration did they receive it like dew into their opening spirits.

"Rise up, Alice, and let us have a dance," and with these words little Abel caught his unreluctant sister round the waist, and whirled her off into the open green, as smooth as a floor. The young gardener took from his pocket a German flute, and began warbling away, with much flourishing execution, the gay lively air of "Oure the water to Charlie," and the happy children, who had been one winter at the dancing-school, and had often danced by themselves on the fairy rings on the hill-side, glided through the gloaming in all the mazes of a voluntary and extemporaneous duet. And then, descending suddenly and beautifully from the very height of glee into a composed gladness, left off the dance in a moment, and again seated themselves in the applauding circle.

"I have dropped my library out of my pocket," said Abel, springing up again—"yonder it is lying on the green. That last touch of the Highland Fling jerked it out. Here it is—bonny Robbie Burns—the Twa Dogs—the Vision—the Cotter's Saturday night—and many—many a gay sang—and some sad ones, which I will leave to Alice there, and other bits o' tender-hearted lassies—but fun and frolic for my money."

"I would not give my copy o' Allan Ramsay," replied Alice, "for a stall fu' o' Burns—at least gin the Saturday Night was clipped out. When did he ever make sic a poem as the Gentle Shepherd? Tell me that, Abel? Dear me, but is na this sweet quiet place, and the linn there, and the trees, and this green plat, just as bonnie as Habbie's How? Might na a bonny poem be made just about ourselves a' sitting here sae happy—and my brother going to marry bonny Sally Mather, and my sister the young laird o' Southfield? I see warrant, if Allan Ramsay had been alive, and one of the party, he would have put us a' into a poem—and aibins called it the Family-Tryst." "I will do that myself," said Abel—"I am a dab at verse. I made some capital ones yesterday afternoon—I wrote them down on my slate below the sun to-tal; but some crumbs had fallen out o' my pouch on the slate, and Luath, licking them up, licked out o' my fine poems. I could regret to think o' it."

But now the moon showed her dazzling crescent right over their heads, as if she had issued gleaming forth from the deep blue of that very spot of heaven in which she hung; and fainter or brighter, far and wide over the firmament, was seen the great host of stars. The old man reverently uncovered his head; and, looking up to the diffused brilliancy of the magnificent arch of heaven, he solemnly exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. My children, let us kneel down and pray." They did so; and, on rising from that prayer, the mother looking towards her husband, said, "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

#### BLIND ALLAN.

ALLAN BRUCE and FANNY RAEURN were in no respect remarkable among the simple inhabitants of the village in which they were born. They both bore a fair reputation in the parish, and they were both beloved by their own friends and relations. He was sober, honest, active, and industrious,—exemplary in the common duties of private life—possessed of the humble virtues becoming his humble condition, and unstained by any of those gross vices that sometimes deform the character of the poor. She was modest, good-tempered, contented, and religious—and much is contained in these four words. Beauty she was not thought to possess—nor did she attract attention; but whatever charm resides in pure health, innocence of heart, and simplicity of manners, that belonged to Fanny Raeburn; while there was nothing about her face or figure to prevent her seeming even beautiful in the eyes of a lover.

These two humble and happy persons were betrothed in marriage. Their affection had insensibly grown without any courtship, for they had lived daily in each other's sight; and, undisturbed by jealousy or rivalry, by agitating hopes or depressing fears, their hearts had been tenderly united long before their troth was solemnly pledged; and they now looked forward with a calm and rational satisfaction to the happy years which they humbly hoped might be stored up for them by a bountiful Providence. Their love was without romance, but it was warm, tender, and true; they were prepared by its strength to make any sacrifice for each other's sake; and, had death taken away either of them before the wedding-day, the survivor might not perhaps have been clamorous in grief, or visited the grave of the departed with nightly lamentations,

but not the less would that grief have been sincere, and not the less faithful would memory have been to all the images of the past.

Their marriage-day was fixed—and Allan Bruce had rented a small cottage, with a garden sloping down to the stream that cheered his native village. Thither, in about two months, he was to take his sweet and affectionate Fanny—she was to work with her needle as before, and he in the fields. No change was to take place in their lives, but a change from contentment to happiness; and if God prolonged to them the possession of health, and blessed them with children, they feared not to bring them decently up, and to afford sunshine and shelter to the living flowers that might come to gladden their house. Such thoughts visited the souls of the lovers, and they were becoming dearer and dearer to one another every hour that brought them closer to their marriage-day.

At this time Allan began to feel a slight dimness in his sight, of which he did not take much notice, attributing it to some indisposition brought on by the severity of his winter's work. For he had toiled late and early, during all weathers, and at every kind of labor, to gain a sum sufficient to furnish respectably his lowly dwelling, and also to array his sweet bride in wedding-clothes of which she should not need to be ashamed. The dimness, however, each succeeding day, darkened and deepened, till even his Fanny's face was indistinctly discerned by him, and he lost altogether the smile which never failed to brighten it whenever he appeared. Then he became sad and despondent, for the fear of blindness fell upon him, and he thought of his steps being led in his helplessness by the hand of a child. He prayed to God to avert this calamity from him—but if not, to bestow upon him the virtue of resignation. He thought of the different blind men whom he had known, and, as far as he knew, they all seemed happy. That belief pacified his soul, when it was about to give way to a passionate despair; and every morning at sunrise, when the fast advancing verdure of spring seemed more dim and glimmering before his eyes, he felt his soul more and more resigned to that final extinction of the day's blessed light, which he knew must be his doom before the earth was covered with the flowers and fragrance of June.

It was as he had feared; and Allan Bruce was now stone-blind. Fanny's voice had always been sweet to his ear, and now it was sweeter still when heard in the darkness. Sweet had been the kisses which breathed from Fanny's lips while his eyes delighted in their rosy freshness. But sweeter were they now when they touched his eyelids, and he felt upon his cheeks her fast trickling tears. She visited him in his father's house, and led him with her gently guiding hands into the adjacent fields, and down along the stream which he said he liked to hear murmuring by; and then they talked together about themselves, and on their knees prayed to God to counsel them what to do in their distress.

These meetings were always happy meetings to which both, notwithstanding the many mournful thoughts with which they were necessarily attended; but to Allan Bruce they yielded a support that did not forsake him in his hours of unaccompanied darkness. His love, which had formerly been joyful in the warmth of youth, and in the near prospect of enjoyment, was now chastened by the sad sense of his unfortunate condition, and rendered thereby a deep and devout emotion which had its comfort in its own unwitnessed privacy and imperishable truth. The tones of his Fanny's voice were with him on his midnight bed, when his affliction was like to overcome his fortitude; and to know that he was still tenderly beloved by that gentle and innocent friend, was a thought that gave light to darkness, and suffered sleep to fall balmily on lids that shut up eyes already dark as in profoundest slumber. The meek fold of her pitying embrace was with him in the vague uncertainty of his dreams; and often he saw faces in his sleep beaming consolation upon him, that he always assumed at last Fanny's features, and as they grew more distinct, brightened up into a perfect likeness of his own faithful and disinterested maiden. He lay down with her image, because it was in his evening prayers; he rose up with her image, or it came gliding in upon him, as he knelt down at his bed-side in the warm beams of the unseen morning light.

Allan and Fanny were children of poor parents; and when he became blind, they, and indeed all their friends and relations, set their faces against this marriage. This they did in kindness to them both, for prudence is one of the best virtues of the poor, and to indulge even the holiest affections of our nature, seems to them to be sinful, if an infirmity from God's hand intimates that such union would lead to sorrow and distress. The same thoughts had taken possession of Allan's own soul; and loving Fanny Raeburn, with a perfect affection, why should he wish her, in the bright and sunny days of her youthful prime, to become chained to a blind man's steps, kept in constant poverty and drudgery for his sake, and imprisoned in a lonesome hut, during the freedom of her age, and the joyfulness of nature ringing over the earth? "It has pleased God," said the blind man to himself, "that our marriage should not be. Let Fanny, if she chooses, some time or other marry another, and be happy." And as the thought arose, he felt the bitterest of the cup, and wished that he might soon be in his grave.

For, while his eyes were not thus dark, he saw many things that gave him pleasure, besides his Fanny, well as he loved her; nor had he been an absorbing passion, although most sincere. He had often been happy at his work, with his companions, in the amusements of his age and condition, with the members of his own family, without thinking even of his dear Fanny Raeburn. She was not often, to be sure, entirely out of his thoughts, from the consciousness of loving her, and of being beloved, accompanied his steps, although he scarcely knew it, just as one who lives on a lake side, or by the murmur of a stream, may feel the brightness and the

shadows of the one, and hear the constant music of the other, mingling as a remembrance or a dream with the impressions, thoughts, passions, and feelings of his ordinary human life. But now, what had been less pleasant or necessary to him all faded away, and he saw in his darkness one image only—Fanny Raeburn—he heard in his darkness one sound only—Fanny Raeburn's voice. Was she to smile in another man's house? Surely that could not be; for her smiles were his, and to transfer them to another seemed to him to be as impossible as for a mother to forget her own children, and pour with equal fondness her smiles upon the face of another who belonged not to her blood. Yet such transference, such forgetfulness, such sad change had been, that he well knew, even in "the short and simple annals of the poor," which alone he had read; and who would blame, who would pity, who would remember the case of the deserted and forsaken poor blind man?

Fanny Raeburn had always been a dutiful child, and she listened to the arguments of her parents with a heavy but composed heart. She was willing to obey them in all things in which it was her duty to obey—but here she knew not what was her duty. To give up Allan Bruce was a thought far worse to her than to give up life. It was to suffer her heart-strings to be hourly torn up by the roots. If the two were willing to be married, why should any one else interfere? If God had stricken Allan with blindness after their marriage, would any one have counselled her to leave him? Or pitied her because she had to live with her own blind husband? Or would the fear of poverty have benumbed her feelings? Or rather, would it not have given new alacrity to her hands, and new courage to her heart? So she resolved, meekly and calmly, to tell Allan that she would be his wife, and that she believed that such was, in spite of this affliction, the will of God.

Allan Bruce did not absent himself, in his blindness, from the house of God. One Sabbath, after divine service, Fanny went up to him in the church-yard, and putting her arm in his, they walked away together, seemingly as cheerful as the rest of the congregation, only with somewhat slower and more cautious steps. They proceeded along the quiet meadow-fields by the banks of the stream, and then across the smooth green braes, till they gently descended into a hollow, and sat down together in a little green bower, which a few hazels, mingling with one tall weeping birch, had of themselves framed; a place where they had often met before Allan was blind, and where they had first spoken of a wedded life. Fanny could have almost wist to see the earth, and the sky, and the whole day so beautiful, now that Allan's eyes were dark; but he whispered to her, that the smell of the budding trees, and of the primroses that he knew were near his feet, was pleasant indeed, and that the singing of all the little birds made his heart dance within him—so Fanny sat beside her blind lover in serene happiness, and felt strengthened in her conviction that it was her duty to become his wife.

"Allan—I love you so entirely—that to see you happy is all that I desire on earth. Till God made you blind, Allan, I knew not how my soul could be knit unto yours—I knew not the love that was in my heart. To sit by you with my work—to lead you out thus on pleasant Sabbaths—to take care that your feet do not stumble—and that nothing shall ever offer violence to your face—to suffer no solitude to surround you—but that you may know, in your darkness, that mine eyes, which God still permits to see, are always upon you—for these ends, Allan, I will marry thee, my beloved—thou must not say nay—for God would not forgive me if I became not thy wife." And Fanny fell upon his neck and wept.

There was something in the quiet tone of her voice—something in the meek fold of her embrace—something in the long weeping kiss that she kept breathing tenderly over his brow and eyes—that justified to the blind man his marriage with such a woman. "Let us be married, Fanny, on the day fixed before I lost my sight. Till now I knew not fully either your heart or my own—now I fear nothing. Would, my best friend, I could but see thy sweet face for one single moment now—but that can never be!"—"All these things are possible to God; and although to human skill your case is hopeless—it is not utterly so to my heart—yet if ever it becomes so, Allan, then will I love thee better even than I do now, if indeed my heart can contain more affection than that with which it now overflows."

Allan Bruce and Fanny Raeburn were married. And although there was felt, by the most careless heart, to be something sad and solemn in such nuptials, yet Allan made his marriage-day one of sober cheerfulness in his native village. Fanny wore her white ribands in the very way that used to be pleasant to Allan's eyes; and, blind as he now was, these eyes kindled with a joyful smile, when he turned the clear sightless orbs towards his bride, and saw her within his soul arrayed in the simple white dress which he heard all about him saying so well became her sweet looks. Her relations and his own partook of the marriage-feast in their cottage—there was the sound of music and dancing feet on the little green plat at the foot of the garden, by the river's side—the bride's youngest sister, who was henceforth to be an inmate in the house, remained when the party went away in the quiet of the evening—and peace, contentment, and love, folded their wings together over that humble dwelling.

From that day Allan and his wife were perfectly happy—and they could not help wondering at their former fears. There was, at once, a general determination formed all over the parish to do them every benefit. Fanny, who had always been distinguished for her skill and fancy as a sempstress, became now quite the fashionable dress-maker of the village, and had more employment offered than she could accept. So that her industry alone was more than sufficient for all their



present wants. But Allan, though blind, was not idle. He immediately began to instruct himself in various departments of a blind man's work. A loom was purchased; and in a few weeks he was heard singing to the sound of his fly-shuttle only as the bullfinch in the cage that hung at the window of his room. He was not lost in finding out the way of plaiting rush-rugs and wicker-baskets—the figures of all of which were soon, as it were, visible through his very fingers; and before six months were over, Allan Bruce and his wife were said to be getting rich, and a warm blessing broke from every heart upon them, and their virtuous and unrepining industry.

Allan had always been fond of music, and his voice was of the finest tenor in all the Kirk. So he began in the evenings of winter to teach a school for sacred music—and thus every hour was turned to account. Allan repined not now—nay, at times he felt as if his blindness were a blessing—for it forced him to trust to his own soul—to turn for comfort to the best and purest human affections—and to see God always.

Whatever misgivings of mind Allan Bruce might have experienced—whatever faintings and sickenings and deadly swoons of despair might have overcome his heart—it was not long before he was a freed man from all their slavery. He was not immured, like many as worthy as he, in an asylum; he was not an incubance upon a poor father, sitting idle and in the way of others, beside an ill-fed fire and a scanty board; he was not forced to pace step by step along the lamp-lighted streets and squares of a city, forcing out beautiful music to gain a few pieces of coin from passers by entranced for a moment by sweet sounds plaintive or joyous; he was not a boy-led beggar along the highway under the sickening sunshine or the chilling sleet, with an abject but abjectly proud with a cold heart for colder charity—but he was, although he humbly felt and acknowledged that he was in nothing more worthy than these, a man loaded with many blessings, warmed by a constant ingale, laughed round by a flock of joyful children, love-tended and love-lighted by a wife who was to him at once music and radiance—while his wife stood in the middle of a village of which all the inhabitants were his friends, and of all whose hands the knock was known when it touched his door, and of all whose voices the tone was felt when it kindly accented him in the wood, in the field, in the garden, by the river's side, by the hospitable board of a neighbor, or in the church-yard assemblage before entering into the house of God.

Thus did years pass along. Children were born to them—lived—were healthy—and well-behaved. A blessing rested upon them and all that belonged to them, and the name of "Blind Allan" carried with it far and near an authority that could belong only to virtue, piety, and faith tried by affliction and found to stand fast.

Ten years ago, when they married, Allan Bruce and Fanny Raeburn were among the poorest of the poor, and had it innocent God to send sickness among them, hard had been their lot. But now they lived in a better house, with a larger garden, and a few fields, with two cows of their own. Allan had worked under him, a basket-maker now on a considerable scale—and his wife had her apprentices too, the best dress-maker all the country round. They were rich. Their children were at school—and all things, belonging both to outer and inner life, had prospered to their heart's desire. Allan could walk about many familiar places unattended; but that seldom happened, for while his children were at school he was engaged in his business; and when they came home, there was always a loving contest among them who should be allowed to take hold of their father's hand when he went out on his evening walk. Well did he know the tread of each loving creature's footstep—their very breath when their voices were silent. One touch of a head as it danced past him, or remained motionless by his side—one pressure of an arm upon his knee—one laugh from a corner, was enough to tell him which of his children was there; and in their most confused noise and merriment, his ear would have known if one romping imp had been away. So perfectly accustomed had he long been to his situation, that it might almost be said that he was unconscious of being blind, or that he had forgotten that his eyes once saw. Long had Allan Bruce indeed been the happiest of the blind.

It chanced at this time, that among a party who were visiting his straw manufactory, there was a surgeon celebrated for his skill in operations upon the eye, who expressed an opinion that Allan's sight might be at least partially restored, and offered not only to perform the operation, but if Allan would reside for some weeks in Edinburgh, to see him every day, till it was known whether his case was or was not a hopeless one. Allan's circumstances were now such as to make a few weeks' or even months' confinement of no importance to him; and though he said to his wife that he was averse to submit to an operation that might disturb the long-formed quiet and contentment of his mind by hopes never to be realized, yet those hopes of once more seeing Heaven's dear light gradually removed all his repugnance. His eyes were couched, and when the bandages were removed, and the soft broken light lay in upon him, Allan Bruce was no longer among the number of the blind.

There was no uncontrollable burst of joy in the soul of Allan Bruce when once more a communication was opened between it and the visible world. For he had learned lessons of humility and temperance in all his emotions during ten years of blindness, in which the hope of light was too faint to deserve the name. He was almost afraid to believe that his sight was restored. Grateful to him was his first uncertain and wavering glimmer, as a draught of water to a wretch in a crowded dungeon.—But he knew not whether it was to ripen into the perfect day, or gradually to fade back again into the depth of his former darkness.

But when his Fanny—she on whom he had so loved to

look, when she was a maiden in her teens, and who would not forsake him in the first misery of that great affliction, but had been overjoyed to link the sweet freedom of her prime to one sitting in perpetual dark—when she, now a staid and lovely matron, stood before him with a face pale in bliss, and all drenched in the flood-like tears of an insupportable happiness—then truly did he feel what a heaven it was to see! And as he took her to his heart, he gently bent back her head, that he might devour with his eyes that benign beauty which had for so many years smiled upon him unheeded, and which now that he had seen once more, he felt that he could even at that very moment die in peace.

In came with soft steps, one after another, his five loving children, that for the first time they might be seen by their father. The girls advanced timidly, with blushing cheeks and bright shining hair, while the boys went boldly up to his side, and the eldest, looking in his face, exclaimed with a shout of joy, "Our father sees!—our father sees!"—and then checking his rapture, burst into tears. Many a vision had Allan Bruce framed to himself of the face and figure of one and all of his children. One, he had been told, was like himself—another the image of his mother—and Lucy, he understood, was a blended likeness of them both. But now he looked upon them with the confused and bewildered joy of parental love, seeking to know and distinguish in the light the separate objects towards whom it yearned; and not till they spoke did he know their Christian names. But soon did the sweet faces of all his children seem, to his eyes, to answer well, each in its different loveliness, to the expression of the voices so long familiar to his heart.

Pleasant, too, no doubt, was that expansion of heart that followed the sight of so many old friends and acquaintances, all of whom, familiar as he had long been with them in his darkness, one day's light now seemed to bring farther forward in his affection. They came towards him now with brighter satisfaction—and the happiness of his own soul gave a kinder expression to their demeanor, and represented them all as a host of human beings rejoicing in the joy of one single brother. Here was a young man, who, when he saw him last, was a little school-boy—here a man beginning to be bent with toil, and with a thoughtful aspect, who had been one of his own joyous and laughing fellow-laborers in field or at air—here a man on whom, ten years before, he had shut his eyes in advanced but vigorous life, now sitting, with a white head, and supported on a staff—all this change he knew before, but now he saw it; and there was thus a somewhat sad, but an interesting, delightful, and impressive contrast and resemblance between the past and the present, brought immediately before him by the removal of the veil. Every face around him—every figure—was instructive as well as pleasant; and humble as his sphere of life was, and limited its range, quite enough of chance and change was now submitted to his meditation, to give his character, which had long been thoughtful, a still more solemn cast, and a temper of still more homely and humble wisdom.

Nor did all the addition to his happiness come from human life. Once more he saw the heavens and the earth. By men in his lowly condition, nature is not looked on very often perhaps with poetical eyes. But all the objects of nature are in themselves necessarily agreeable and delightful; and the very colors and forms he now saw filled his soul with bliss. Not for ten dark years had he seen a cloud, and now they were piled up like castles in the summer heaven. Not for ten dark years had he seen the vaulted sky, and there it was now bending majestically in its dark, deep, serene azure, full of tenderness, beauty, and power. The green earth, with all its flowers, was now visible beneath his feet.—A hundred gardens blossomed—a hundred hedge-rows ran across the meadow and up the sides of the hills—the dark grove of sycamore, shading the village church on its mount, stood tinged with a glitter of yellow light—and from one extremity of the village to the other, calm, fair, and unwavering, the smoke from all its chimneys went up to heaven on the dewy morning-air. He felt all this just by opening his eyelids. And in his gratitude to God he blessed the thatch of his own humble house, and the swallows that were uttering beneath its eaves.

Such, perhaps, were some of the feelings which Allan Bruce experienced on being restored to sight. But faint and imperfect must be every picture of man's inner soul. This, however, is true, that Allan Bruce now felt that his blindness had been to him, in many respects, a blessing. It had touched all hearts with kindness towards him and his wife when they were poor—it had kept his feet within the doors of his house, or within the gate of his garden, often when they might otherwise have wandered into less happy and innocent places—it turned to him the sole undivided love of his sweet contented Fanny—it gave to the filial tenderness of his children something of fondest passion—and it taught him moderation in all things, humility, reverence, and perfect resignation to the Divine Will. It may, therefore, be truly said, that when the blameless man once more lifted up his seeing eyes, in all things he beheld God.

Soon after this time, a small nursery-garden, between Roslin and Lasswade—a bank sloping down gently to the Esk—was on sale, and Allan Bruce was able to purchase it. Such an employment seemed peculiarly fitted for him, and also compatible with his other profession.—He had acquired, during his blindness, much useful information from the readings of his wife or children; and having been a gardener in his youth, among his many other avocations, he had especially extended his knowledge respecting flowers, shrubs, and trees. Here he follows that healthy, pleasant, and intelligent occupation. Among his other assistant-gardeners there is one man with a head white as snow, but a ruddy and cheerful countenance, who, from his self-importance, seems to be the proprietor of the garden. This is Allan's father, who lives in a small cottage adjoining—takes care of all the

gardening tools—and is master of the bee-hives. His old mother, too, is sometimes seen weeding; but often, with her grandchildren, when in the evening, after school, they are playing on the green plat by the Sun-Dial, with flowers garlanded round their heads, or feeding the large trout in the clear silvery well near the roots of the celebrated pear-tree.

#### LILIAS GRIEVE.

THERE was fear and melancholy in all the glens and valleys that lay stretching around, or down upon St. Mary's Loch, for it was the time of religious persecution.—Many a sweet cottage stood untenanted on the hill-side and in the hollow; some had felt the fire and been consumed, and violent hands had torn off the turf roof from the green shealing of the shepherd. In the wide and deep silence and solitariness of the mountains, it seemed as if human life were nearly extinct. Caverns and cliffs in which the fox had kennelled, were now the shelter of Christian souls—and when a lonely figure crept stealthily from one hiding-place to another, on a visit of love to some hunted brother in faith, the crows would hover over him, and the hawk shriek at human steps now rare in the desert. When the babe was born, there might be none near to baptize it, or the minister, driven from his Kirk, perhaps poured the sacramental water upon its face from some pool in the glen, whose rocks guarded the persecuted family from the oppressor. Bridals now were infrequent, and in the solemn sadness of love many died before their time, of minds sunken and of broken hearts. White hair was on heads long before they were old; and the silver locks of ancient men were often ruefully soiled in the dust, and stained with their martyred blood.

But this is the dark side of the picture. For, even in their caves were these people happy. Their children were with them, even like the wild-flowers that blossomed all about the entrances of their dens. And when the voice of psalms rose up from the profound silence of the solitary place of rocks, the ear of God was open, and they knew that their prayers and praises were heard in Heaven. If a child was born, it belonged unto the faithful; if an old man died, it was in the religion of his forefathers. The hidden powers of their souls were brought forth into the light, and they knew the strength that was in them for these days of trial. The thoughtless became sedate—the wild were tamed—the unfeeling made compassionate—hard hearts were softened, and the wicked saw the error of their ways. All deep passion purified and strengthened the soul, and so was it now. Now was shown and put to the proof, the stern, austere, impenetrable strength of men, that would neither bend nor break—the calm, serene determination of matrons, who, with meek eyes and unblanched cheeks, met the scowl of the murderer—the silent beauty of maidens, who with smiles received their death—and the mysterious courage of children, who, in the inspiration of innocent and spotless nature, knelt down among the dew drops on the green sward, and died fearlessly by their parents' sides. Arrested were they at their work, or in their play; and with no other bandage over their eyes, but happily some clustering ringlets of their sunny hair, did many a sweet creature of twelve summers ask just to be allowed to say her prayers, and then go unappalled from her cottage-door to the breast of her Redeemer.

In those days had old Samuel Grieve and his spouse suffered sorely for their faith. But they left not their own house, willing to die there, or to be slaughtered whenever God should so appoint. They were now childless; but a little granddaughter, about ten years old, lived with them, and she was an orphan. The thought of death was so familiar to her, that although sometimes it gave a slight quaking throbb to her heart in its glee, yet it scarcely impaired the natural joyfulness of her girlhood, and often unconsciously, after the gravest or the saddest talk with her old parents, would she glide off with a lightsome step, a blithe face, and a voice humming sweetly some cheerful tune. The old people looked often upon her in her happiness, till their dim eyes filled with tears; while the grandmother said, "If this nest were to be destroyed at last, and our heads in the mould, who would feed this young bird in the wild, and where would she find shelter in which to fledge her bonnie wings?"

Lilias Grieve was the shepherdess of a small flock, among the green pasturage at the head of St. Mary's Loch, and up the hill side, and over into some of the little neighboring glens. Sometimes she sat in that beautiful church-yard, with her sheep lying scattered around her upon the quiet graves, where, on still sunny days, she could see their shadows in the water of the Loch, and herself sitting close to the low walls of the house of God. She had no one to speak to, but her bible to read; and day after day the rising sun beheld her in growing beauty, and innocence that could not fade, happy and silent as a fairy upon the knave, with the blue heavens over her head, and the blue lake smiling at her feet.

"My Fairy" was the name she bore by the cottage fire, where the old people were gladdened by her glee, and turned away from all melancholy thoughts. And it was a name that suited sweet Lilias well; for she was clothed in a garb of green, and often, in her joy, the green garbed plants that grew among the hills were wreathed round her hair. So was the dress one Sabbath-day, watching her flock at a considerable distance from home, and singing to herself a psalm in the solitary moor—when in a moment a party of soldiers were upon a mound on the opposite side of a narrow dell. Lilias was invisible as a green linnet upon the grass, but her sweet voice had betrayed her, and then one of the soldiers caught the wild gleam of her eyes, and as she sprung frightened to her feet, he called out "A roe—a roe—see how she bounds along the bent." and the ruffian took aim at the child with his musket, half in sport, half in ferocity. Lilias kept appearing and disappearing, while she flew as on wings across

the piece of black heathery moss full of pits and hollows—and still the soldier kept his musket at its aim. His comrades called to him to hold his hand, and not shoot a poor little innocent child, but he at length fired, and the bullet was heard to whiz past her fern-crowned head, and to strike a bank which she was about to ascend. The child paused for a moment, and looked back, and then bounded away over the smooth turf; till, like a cushat, she dropt into a little burchen glen, and disappeared. Not a sound of her feet was heard—she seemed to have sunk into the ground—and the soldier stood, without any effort to follow her, gazing through the smoke towards the spot where she had vanished.

A sudden superstition assailed the hearts of the party, as they sat down together upon a ledge of stone. "Saw you her face, Riddle, as my ball went whizzing past her ear—curse me, if she be not one of those hill fairies, else she had been as dead as a herring—but I believe the bullet glanced off her yellow hair as against a buckler."—"By St. George, it was the act of a gallow-rogue to fire upon the creature, fairy or not fairy, and you deserve the weight of this hand, the hand of an Englishman, you brute—for your cruelty!"—and up rose the speaker to put his threat into execution, when the other retreated some distance, and began to load his musket—but the Englishman ran upon him, and, with a Cumberland gripe and trip, laid him upon the hard ground with a force that drove the breath out of his body, and left him stunned and almost insensible. "That serves him right, Allan Sleigh—shiver my timbers, if I would fire upon a petticoat. As to fairies, why, look ye, 'tis a likely place enow for such creatures—if this be one, it is the first I ever saw—but as to your mermaids, I have seen a score of them, at different times, when I was at sea. As to shooting at them—no—no—we never tried that, or the ship would have gone to the bottom. There have I seen them sitting on a rock, with a looking-glass, combing their hair, that wrapped round them like a net, and then down into a coral cave in a jiffy to their merman—for mermaid, fairy, or mere flesh and blood women, they are all the same in that respect—take my word for it."

The fallen ruffian now rose somewhat humbled, and sullenly sat down among the rest. "Why," quoth Allan Sleigh, "I wager you a week's pay you don't venture fifty yards without your musket, down yonder shingle where the fairy disappeared?"—"and the wagger being accepted, the half-drunk fellow rushed on towards the head of the glen, and was heard crashing away through the shrubs. In a few minutes he returned—declaring with an oath that he had seen her at the mouth of a cave where no human foot could reach, standing with her hair all on fire, and an angry countenance, and that he had tumbled backwards into the burn and been nearly drowned—"Drowned!" cried Allan Sleigh. "Ay, drowned—why not? a hundred yards down that bit gen the pools are as black as pitch and as deep as hell, and the water roars like thunder—drowned—why not, you English son of a deer-stealer?" "Why not—because who was ever drowned that was born to be hanged?" And that just caused universal laughter—as it is always sure to do, often as it may be repented, in a company of ruffians, such is felt to be its perfect truth and unanswerable simplicity.

After an hour's quarrelling, and gibing, and mutiny, this disorderly band of soldiers proceeded on their way down into the head of Yarrow, and there saw in the solitude the house of Samuel Grieve. Thither they proceeded to get some refreshment, and ripe for any outrage that any occasion might suggest. The old man and his wife hearing a tumult of many voices and many feet, came out, and were immediately saluted with many opprobrious epithets. The hut was soon rifled of any small articles of wearing apparel, and Samuel, without emotion, set before them whatever provisions he had, butter, cheese, bread, and milk—and hoped they would not be too hard upon old people, who were desirous of dying, as they had lived, in peace. Thankful were they both in their parental hearts that their little Lilius was among the hills; and the old man trusted, that if she returned before the soldiers were gone, she would see from some distance their muskets on the green before the door, and hide herself among the bracken.

The soldiers devoured their repast with many oaths, and much hideous and obscene language, which it was sore against the old man's soul to hear in his own hut; but he said nothing, for that would have been wilfully to sacrifice his life. At last one of the party ordered him to return thanks in words impious and full of blasphemy, which Samuel calmly refused to do, beseeching them, at the same time, for the sake of their own souls, not so to offend their great and bountiful Preserver.

"Confound the old canting Covenantan, I will prick him with my bayonet if he won't say grace," and the blood trickled down the old man's cheek, from a slight wound on his forehead. The sight of it seemed to awaken the dormant blood-thirstiness in the tiger heart of the soldier, who now swore if the old man did not instantly repeat the words after him, he would shoot him dead. And, as if cruelty were contagious, almost the whole party agreed that the demand was but reasonable, and that the old hypocritical knave must preach or perish. "Damn him," cried one of them in a fury, "here is the Word of God, a great musty Bible, stinking of greasy black leather, worse than a whole tin-yard. If he won't speak, I will gag him with a vengeance. Here, old Mr. Peden the prophet, let me cram a few chapters of St. Luke down your maw. St. Luke was a physician, I believe. Well, here is a dose of him. Open your jaws." And with these words he tore a handful of leaves out of the Bible, and advanced towards the old man, from whose face his terrified wife was now wiping off the blood.

Samuel Grieve was nearly furore; but his sinews were not yet relaxed, and in his younger days he had been a man of great strength. When, therefore, the soldier grasped him by the neck, the sense of receiving an indignity from such a

slave made his blood boil, and, as if his youth had been renewed, the gray-headed man, with one blow, felled the ruffian to the floor.

That blow sealed his doom. There was a fierce tumult and yelling of wrathful voices, and Samuel Grieve was led out to die. He had witnessed such butchery of others—and felt that the hour of his martyrdom was come. "As thou didst reprove Simon Peter in the garden, when he smote the High Priest's servant, and said, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'—So now, O my Redeemer, do thou pardon me, thy frail and erring follower, and enable me to drink this cup!" With these words the old man knelt down unbidden; and, after one solemn look to Heaven, closed his eyes, and folded his hands across his breast.

His wife now came forward, and knelt down beside the old man. "Let us die together, Samuel; but oh! what will become of our dear Lilius?" "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," said her husband, opening not his eyes, but taking her hand into his, "Sarah—be not afraid." "Oh! Samuel, I remember, at this moment, these words of Jesus, which you this morning read, 'Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do.' 'We are all sinners together,' said Samuel, with a loud voice—"I we two old gray-headed people on our knees, and about to die, both forgive you all as we hope ourselves to be forgiven. We are ready—be merciful, and do not mangle us. Sarah, be not afraid."

It seemed that an angel was sent down from Heaven to save the lives of these two old gray-headed folk. With hair floating in sunny light, and seemingly wreathed with flowers of heavenly azure, with eyes beaming lustre, and yet streaming tears, with white arms extended in their beauty, and motion gentle and gliding as the sunshine when a cloud is rolled away, came on over the meadow before the hut the same green-robed creature that had startled the soldiers with her singing in the moor, and crying loudly, but still sweetly, "God sent me hither to save their lives." She fell down beside them as they knelt together; and then, lifting up her head from the turf, fixed her beautiful face, instinct with fear, love, hope, and the spirit of prayer, upon the eyes of the men about to shed that innocent blood.

They all stood heart-stricken: and the executioners flung down their muskets upon the green sward. "God bless you, kind good soldiers, for this," exclaimed the child, now weeping and sobbing with joy, "Ay—ay—you will be all happy to-night, when you lie down to sleep. If you have any little daughters or sisters like me, God will love them for your mercy to us, and nothing, till you return home, will hurt a hair of their heads—Oh! I see now that soldiers are not so cruel as we say." "Lilius, your grandfather speaks unto you—his last words are—leave us—leave us—for they are going to put us to death. Soldiers, kill not this little child, or the waters of the loch will rise up and drown the sons of perdition. Lilius, give us each a kiss—and then go into the house."

The soldiers conversed together for a few minutes, and seemed now like men themselves condemned to die. Shame and remorse for their coward cruelty smote them to the core—and they bade them that were still kneeling to rise up and go their ways—then, forming themselves into regular order, one gave the word of command, and, marching off, they soon disappeared. The old man, his wife, and little Lilius, continued for some time on their knees in prayer, and then all three went into their hut—the child between them—and a withered hand of each laid upon its beautiful and its fearless head.

#### THE COVENANTER'S MARRIAGE-DAY.

THE marriage party were to meet in a little lonesome dell, well known to all the dwellers round St. Mary's Loch. A range of bright green hills goes southward from its shores, and between them and the high heathery mountains lies a shapeless scene of cliffs, moss, and pasture, partaking both of the beauty and the grandeur between which it so wildly lies. All these cliffs are covered with native birch-trees, except a few of the loftiest that shoot up their bare points in many fantastic forms; the moss, full of what the shepherds call "hags," or hollows worn by the weather, or dug out for fuel, waves, when the wind goes by, its high rich-blossomed and fragrant heath; and that pasture, here and there in circular spots of emerald verdure, affords the sweetest sustenance to the sheep to be found among all that mountainous region. It was in one of these circles of beautiful herbage, called by the shepherds "The Queen Fairy's Parlor," that Mark Keer and Christian Lindsay, who had long been betrothed, were now to be made man and wife. It was nearly surrounded by large masses, or ledges of loose rocks, piled to a considerable height upon each other by some strong convulsion, and all adorned with the budding and sweet-breathing birches, while the circle was completed by one overshadowing cliff that sheltered it from the north blast, and on whose airy summit the young hawks were shrilly and wildly crying in their nest.

The bridegroom was sitting there with his bride, and her bridesmaid; and by and by, one friend after another appeared below the natural arch that, all dropping with wild-flowers, formed the only entrance into this lonely tabernacle. At last they all stood up in a circle together—shepherds decently apparelled—shepherdeses all dressed in raiment bleached whiter than the snow in the waters of the mountain-spring, and the gray-headed minister of God, who, driven from his Kirk by blood-thirsty persecution, prayed and preached in the wilderness, baptized infants with the water of the running brook, and joined in wedlock the hands of those whose hearts longed to be united in those dark and deadly times. Few words were uttered by the gracious old man; but these few were solemn and full of cheer, impressed upon the hearts of

the wedded pair, by the tremulous tones of a voice that was not long for this world, by the sanctity of his long white locks unmoved by a breath of air, and by the fatherly and apostolical motion of his uplifted hand, that seemed to conduct down upon them who stood in awe before him the blessings of that God who delighteth in an humble heart. The short ceremony was now closed—and Mark Keer and Christian Lindsay were united, till death should sunder them on earth to remain thus in heaven.

Greetings were interchanged—and smiles went round, with rosy blushes, and murmuring and whispering voices of irrisproachable mirth. What though the days were dark, and the oppressor strong? Here was a place unknown to his foot; and now was a time to let the clear sparkling fountain of nature's joy swell up in all hearts. Sadness and sorrow overshadowed the land; but human life was not yet wholly a waste; and the sweet sunshine that now fell down through a screen of fleecy clouds upon the Queen Fairy's Parlor, was it not to enliven and rejoice all their souls? Was it not to make the fair bride fairer in her husband's eyes—her smile brighter, and the ringlets more yellow as they hung over a forehead that wore its silken anod no longer, but in its changed covering gracefully showed that Christian Lindsay was now a wife? The labour and the pipe were heard; and footstep, that left no print on the hard smooth verdant floor, kept time to the merry measures. Perhaps the old man would have frowned on such pastime—perhaps covenanters ought not to have indulged in promiscuous dancing—perhaps it may be said to be false that they did so; but the minister had gone now to his own hiding-place. These covenanters were young, and this occasion was a happy one; and dance they did, most assuredly, wicked as it may have been, and improper as it may be to record such wickedness. The young hawks were not a little alarmed; and an old ram, who happened to put in his twisted horns below the arch, got a fright, that made him bound backwards out of the enchanted circle. The hill blackbird wondered; but he himself joined the dance upon the birchen spray—and although no great songster, he did his best, and chirped cheerfully his mellow notes in the din of the general happiness.

But as the evening hours were advancing, the party kept dropping away one by one, or in pairs, just as it had gathered; and the Fairy Queen had her parlor all to herself undisturbed, if she chose at night to hold a court beneath the lamp of the moon.

Where had the young married pair their bridal chamber? Mark Keer had a shealing on the mountain-side, from which was just visible one bay of St. Mary's Loch. The walls were built of turf, and the roof of heather—and surrounded as it was on all sides by large stones, wooded cliffs, knoves, and uneven eminences, it was almost as likely to escape notice as the nest of a bird, or the lair of a roe. Thither he took his bride. Her little bridesmaid had a small covert of her own, distant only a few rods, and the friends could see each other standing at the door of each shealing, through the intercepting foliage of the waving birches that hung down their thin and ineffectual veil till it swept the blooming heather.

On a small seat, framed of the roots of decayed trees, Mark Keer was now sitting with his own sweet Christian; when he gently raised her head from his bosom, and told her to go into the shealing, for he saw people on the hill-side, whose appearance, even at that distance, he did not like. Before a quarter of an hour had elapsed a party of soldiers were at hand. Mark knew that he had been observed for some time; and to attempt escape with his bride was impossible. So he rose at their approach, and met them with a steady countenance, although there were both fear and sorrow in his heart, Christian had obeyed him, and the shealing was silent.

"Is your name Mark Keer?" "Yes—that is my name." "Were you at Yarrow-Ford when a prisoner was rescued and a soldier murdered?" "I was—but did all I could to save that soldier's life." "You wof, you mangled his throat with your own bloody fangs—but we have traced you to your den, and the ghost of Hugh Gemmel, who was as pleasant either with lad or lass as any boy that ever emptied a cup or had a fall upon heather, will shake hands with you by moonlight and by day. You may meet either in the church-yard, down by the Loch, where your canting Covenanters will bury you, or down at Yarrow-Kirk, where Hugh was put to bed with the worms, in his red coat, like a soldier as he was. By the Holy God of Israel—in (not that a lump of your slang?)—this bayonet shall drink a stoup of your heart's blood."

Mark Keer knew, in a moment, that there was no hope of life. He had confessed being present on the occasion charged against him; and a sentence of death, which an angel's intercession could not have got reversed, was glaring in the eyes of all the soldiers. Each man seemed to kindle into fiercer fury as he caught the fiery eyes around him. Their oaths and execrations exasperated them all into frenzy; and a wild and perturbed sense of justice demanding expiation of their murdered comrade's blood, made them deaf and blind to every thing but the suggestions of their own irritated and inflamed hearts. A horrid sympathy possessed them all; and they were as implacable as a herd of wolves famished and in night of their prey. There was no mercy in any one face there, else Mark Keer would have appealed to that man, for his life was now sweet and precious, and it was a hard thing to die. "I know his face. He is the very man that stabbed Hugh when he was down with his own bayonet. How do you like that, sirrah?"—and one of the soldiers thrust his long bayonet through Mark's shoulder, till the point was seen at his back, and then drew it out smeared with blood, and returned it to its sheath with a grin of half-glutted vengeance. The wounded man staggered at the blow, and sat down, nearly fainting, upon the seat where a few minutes



before his bride had leant her head upon his bosom. But he uttered not a word, and kept his eyes fixed, not reproachfully but somewhat sadly, and with a faint expression of hope, on the men who seemed determined to be his executioners. The pain, the sickness, the sudden blasting of all his hopes, almost unmanned his resolute heart; and Mark Keer would have now done much to save his life, and something, perhaps, even at the expense of Conscience and Faith. But that weak mood was of short duration—and the good and brave man braced up his heart to receive the doom of death.

Meanwhile one of the soldiers had entered the shealing, and brought out Christian in his grasp. A loud shout of laughter and scornful exultation followed. "Ho—ho—my Heath-Cock, you have got your bonny hen? Catch a Covenant-breaker without his comfort. Is your name Grace, my bonny bairn?" Christian looked around, and saw Mark sitting pale and speechless, with his breast covered with clotted blood. She made no outcry, for grief, and pity, and consternation struck her dumb.—She could not move, for the soldier held her in his arms. But she looked in the ruffian's face with such an imploring countenance, that unconsciously he let her go, and then she went up tottering to poor Mark, and with her white bridal gown wiped off the gore from his breast and kissed his clayey and quivering lips. She then ran to the spring that lay sparkling among its crevices, within a few yards of the shealing, and brought a handful of cold water, which she sprinkled tenderly over his face. The human soul is a wild and terrible thing when inflamed with cruelty and revenge. The soldiers saw little more in all this than a subject for loathsome scurrility and ferocious merriment; and as Christian looked wildly round upon them, one asked, "Are you his sister—his cousin—or his drab?" "Oh! soldiers—soldiers—I am his wife—this blessed day was I married to him. If any of you are married men, think of your wives now at home—remember the day they were brides, and do not murder us quite—if, indeed, my Mark is not already murdered." "Come, come, Mrs. Sweetlips, no more whining—you shall not want a husband. I will marry you myself, and so I dare say will the sergeant there, and also the corporal. Now you have had indulgence enough—no stand back a bit; and do you, Master Paleface, come forward, and down upon your marrow bones." Mark, with great difficulty, rose up, and knelt down as he was ordered.

He had no words to say to his bride; nor hardly did he look at her—so full was his soul of her image, and of holy grief for the desolation in which she would be left by his death. The dewy breath of her gentle and pure kisses was yet in his heart; and the happy signs of maidenly tenderness were now to be changed into groans of incurable despair. Therefore it was that he said nothing as he knelt down, but his pallid lips moved in prayer, and she heard her name indistinctly uttered between those of God and Christ.

Christian Lindsay had been betrothed to him for several years, and nothing but the fear of some terrible evil like this had kept them so long separate. Dreadful, therefore, as this hour was, their souls were not wholly unprepared for it, although there is always a miserable difference between reality and mere imagination. She now recalled to her mind, in one comprehensive thought, their years of innocent and youthful affection; and then the holy words so lately uttered by the old man in that retired place, alas! called by too vain a name, "The Queen Fairy's Parlor!" The tears began now to flow—they both wept—for this night was Mark Keer's head to lie, not on her bosom, but in the grave, or hurled on the ground. In that agony, what signified to her all the insulting, hideous, and inhuman language of these infamous murderers? They fell off her soul, without a stain, like polluted water off the plumage of some fair sea-bird. And as she looked on her husband upon his knees, awaiting his doom, him the temperate, the merciful, the gentle, and the just, and then upon those wrathful, raging, fiery-eyed, and bloody-minded men, are they, thought her fainting heart, of the same kind? are they framed by one God? and hath Christ alike died for them all?

She lifted up her eyes, full of prayers, for one moment to heaven, and then, with a cold shudder of desertion, turned them upon her husband, kneeling with a white, fixed countenance, and half dead already with the loss of blood. A dreadful silence had succeeded to that tumult; and she dimly saw a number of men drawn up together without moving, and their determined eyes held fast upon their victim. "Think, my lady, that it is Hugh Gemmel's ghost that commands you now," said a deep hoarse voice—"no mercy did the holy men of the mountain show to him when they smashed his skull with large stones from the channel of the Yarrow. Now for revenge."

The soldiers presented their muskets—the word was given—and they fired. At that moment Christian Lindsay had rushed forward, and flung herself down on her knees beside her husband, and they both fell, and stretched themselves out mortally wounded upon the grass.

During all this scene, Marion Scott, the bridesmaid, a girl of fifteen, had been lying affrighted among the bracken within a hundred yards of the murder. The agony of grief now got the better of the agony of fear, and leaping up from her concealment, she rushed into the midst of the soldiers, and kneeling down beside her dear Christian Lindsay, lifted up her head, and shaded the hair from her forehead. "Oh! Christian, your eyes are opening—do you hear me—do you hear me speaking?" "Yes, I hear a voice—is it yours, Mark?—speak again." "Oh! Christian, it is only my voice—poor Marion's." "Is Mark dead—quite dead?" And there was no reply: but Christian must have heard the deep gasping sobs that were rending the child's heart. Her eyes, too, opened more widely, and, misty as they were, they saw, indeed, close by her, the huddled up, mangled, and bloody body of her husband.

The soldiers stood like so many beasts of prey, who had gorged their fill of blood; their rage was abated—and they offered no violence to the affectionate child, as she continued to sit before them, with the head of Christian Lindsay in her lap, watering it with tears, and moaning so as to touch, at last, some even of their hardened hearts. When blood is shed, it soon begins to appear a fearful sight to the shudders—and the hand soon begins to tremble that has let out human life. Cruelty cannot sustain itself in presence of that rueful color, and remorse sees it reddening into a more ghastly hue. Some of the soldiers turned away in silence, or with a half-suppressed oath—others strayed off among the trees, and sat down together; and none would now have touched the head of pretty little Marion. The man whom they had shot deserved death—so they said to one another—and he had got it; but the woman's death was accidental, and they were not to blame, because she had run upon their fire. So, before the smell and smoke of the gunpowder had been carried away by the passing breeze from that place of murder, all were silent, and could hardly bear to look one another in the face. Their work had been lamentable indeed. For now they began to see that these murdered people were truly bridegroom and bride. She was lying there dressed with her modest white bridal garments and white ribbons, now streaked with many streams of blood from mortal wounds. So, too, was she who was supporting her head. It was plain that a bridal party had been this very day, and that her hands had prepared for a happy and affectionate newly-wedded pair that bloody bed, and a sleep from which there was to be no awaking at the voice of morn. They stood appalled on the bodies, while, on the wild flowers around them, which the stain of blood had not yet reached, loudly and cheerfully were murmuring the mountain-bees.

Christian Lindsay was not quite dead, and she at last lifted herself up a little way out of Marion's lap, and then falling down with her arms over her husband's neck, uttered a few indistinct words of prayer and expired.

Marion Scott had never seen death before, and it was now presented to her in its most ghastly and fearful shape. Every horror she had ever heard talked of in the hiding-places of her father and relations was now realized before her eyes, and for any thing she knew, it was now her turn to die. Had she dreamed in her sleep of such a trial, her soul would have died within her, and she would have convulsively shrieked aloud on her bed. But the pale, placid, happy-looking face of dead Christian Lindsay, whom she had loved as an elder sister, and who had always been so good to her from the time she was a little child, inspired her now with utter fearlessness—and she could have knelt down to be shot by the soldiers without one quickened pulsation at her heart. But now the soldiers were willing to leave the bloody green, and their leader told Marion she might go her ways and bring her friends to take care of the dead bodies. No one, he said, would hurt her. And soon after the party disappeared.

Marion remained for a while beside the dead. Their wounds bled not now. But she brought water from the little spring and washed them all decently, and left not a single stain upon either of their faces. She disturbed, as little as possible, the position in which they lay; nor removed Christian's arms from her husband's neck. She lifted one of the arms up for a moment to wipe away a spot of blood, but it fell down again of itself, and moved no more.

During all this time the setting sunlight was giving a deeper tinge to the purple heather, and as Marion lifted up her eyes to heaven, she saw in the golden west the last relics of the day. All the wild was silent—not a sound was there but that of the night-hawk. And the darkening stillness touched Marion's young soul with a trembling superstition, as she looked at the dead bodies, then up to the uncertain sky and over the glimmering shades of the solitary glen. The poor girl was half afraid of the deepening hush and the gathering darkness. Yet the spirits of those she had so tenderly loved would not harm her: they had gone to Heaven. Could she find heart to leave them thus lying together?—Yes—there was nothing, she thought, to molest the dead. No raven inhabited this glen; nothing but the dew drops would touch them, till she went to the nearest hiding-place, and told her father or some other friends of the murder.

Before the moon had risen, the same party that on the morning had been present at their marriage, had assembled on the hill-side before the shealing where Mark Keer and Christian Lindsay were now lifted up together on a heather-couch, and lying cold and still as in the grave. The few maids and matrons who had been in that happy scene in the Queen Fairy's parlor, had not yet laid aside their white dresses, and the little starry riband-knots, or bride's favors, were yet upon their breasts. The old minister had come from his cave, and not for many years had he wept till now; but this was a case even for the tears of an old religious man of fourscore.

To watch by the dead all night, and to wait for some days till they could be coffined for burial, was not to be thought of in such times of peril. That would have been to sacrifice the living foolishly for the dead. The soldiers had gone. But they might—no doubt would return and scatter the funeral. Therefore it was no sooner proposed than agreed to in the afflicted souls of them all, that the bridegroom and his bride should be buried even that very night in the clothes in which they had that morning been wedded. A bier was soon formed of the birch-tree boughs; and with their faces meekly looking up to Heaven, now filled with moonlight, they were borne along in sobbing silence, up the hills and down along the glens, till the party stood together in the lone burial-ground, at the head of St. Mary's Loch. A grave was dug for them there, but that was not their own burial-place. For Mark Keer's father and mother lay in the church-yard of Melrose, and the parents of Christian Lindsay slept in that of Both-

well, near the flow of the beautiful Clyde. The grave was half filled with heather, and gently were they laid down together, even as they were found laying on the green before their shealing, into that mournful bed. The old man afterwards said a prayer—not over them—but with the living. Then sitting down on the graves, and on the grave-stones, they spoke of the virtues of the dead. They had, it is true, been cut off in their youthful prime; but many happy days and years had been theirs—their affection for each other had been a pleasant solace to them in toil, poverty, and persecution. This would have been a perplexing day to those who had not faith in God's perfect holiness and mercy. But all who mourned now together were wholly resigned to his dispensations, and soon all eyes were dried. In solemn silence they all quitted the church-yard, and then the funeral party, which a few hours ago had been a marriage one, dissolved among the hills and glens and rocks, and left Mark Keer and Christian Lindsay to everlasting rest.

#### THE BAPTISM.

It is a pleasant and impressive time, when at the close of divine service, in some small country church, there takes place the gentle stir and preparation for a Baptism. A sudden air of cheerfulness spreads over the whole congregation; the more solemn expression of all countenances fades away; and it is at once felt that a rite is about to be performed, which, although of a sacred and awful kind, is yet connected with a thousand delightful associations of purity, beauty, and innocence.—Then there is an eager bending of smiling faces over the humble galleries—an unconscious rising up in affectionate curiosity—and a slight murmuring sound in which is no violation of the Sabbath sanctity of God's house, when in the middle passage of the church the party of women is seen, matrons and maids, who bear in their bosoms, or in their arms, the helpless beings about to be made members of the Christian Community.

There sit, all dressed becomingly in white, the fond and happy baptismal group. The babes have been intrusted for a precious hour, to the bosoms of young maidens, who tenderly fold them to their yearning hearts, and, with endearments taught by nature, are stilling, not always successfully, their plaintive cries. Then the proud and delighted girls rise up, one after the other, in sight of the whole congregation, and hold up the infants, arrayed in neat caps and long flowing linen, into their father's hands. For the poorest of the poor, if he has a heart at all, will have his infant well dressed on such a day, even although it should scant his meal for weeks to come, and force him to spare fuel to his winter fire.

And now the fathers are all standing below the pulpit with grave and thoughtful faces. Each has tenderly taken his infant into his toil-hardened hands, and supports it in gentle and steadfast affection. They are all the children of poverty, and, if they live, are destined to a life of toil. But now poverty puts on its most pleasant aspect, for it is beheld standing before the altar of religion with contentment and faith. This is a time when the better and deeper nature of every man must rise up within him: and when he must feel, more especially, that he is a spiritual and immortal being making covenant with God. He is about to take upon himself a holy charge; to promise to look after his child's immortal soul; and to keep its little feet from the paths of evil, and in those of innocence and peace. Such a thought elevates the lowest mind above itself—diffuses additional tenderness over the domestic relations, and makes them who hold up their infants to the baptismal font, better fathers, husbands, and sons, by the deeper insight which they then possess into their nature and their life.

The minister consecrates the water—and as it falls on his infant's face, the father feels the great oath in his soul. As the poor helpless creature is wailing in his arms, he thinks now needful indeed to human infancy is the love of Providence! And when, after delivering each his child into the arms of the smiling maiden from whom he had received it, he again takes his place for admonition and advice before the pulpit, his mind is well disposed to think on the perfect beauty of that religion of whom the Divine Founder said, "Suffer little children to be brought unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

The rite of Baptism had not thus been performed for several months in the Kirk of Lanark. It was now the hottest time of persecution; and the inhabitants of that parish found other places in which to worship God and celebrate the ordinances of religion. It was now the Sabbath-day—and a small congregation of about a hundred souls had met for divine service in a place of worship more magnificent than any temple that human hands had ever built to Deity. Here, too, were three children about to be baptized. The congregation had not assembled to the toll of the bell—but each heart knew the hour and observed it; for there are a hundred sun-dials among the hills, woods, moors, and fields; and the snapherd and the peasant see the hours passing by them in sunshine and shadow.

The church in which they were assembled was hewn, by God's hand, out of the eternal rocks. A river rolled its way through a mighty chasm of cliffs, several hundred feet high, of which the one side presented enormous masses, and the other corresponding recesses, as if the great stone girdle had been rent by a convulsion. The channel was overspread with prodigious fragments of rock or large loose stones, some of them smooth and bare, others containing soil and verdure in their rents and fissures, and here and there crowned with shrubs and trees. The eye could at once command a long stretching vista, seemingly closed and shut up at both extremities by the coalescing cliffs. This majestic reach of river contained pools, streams, rushing shelves and waterfalls in-

numerable; and when the water was low, which it now was in the common drought, it was easy to walk up this scene with the calm blue sky overhead, an utter and sublime solitude. On looking up, the soul was bowed down by the feeling of that prodigious height of unscalable and often overhanging cliff. Between the channel and the summit of the far-extended precipices were perpetually flying rocks and wood-pigeons, and now and then a hawk, filling the profound abyss with their wild cawing, deep murmur, or shrilly shriek. Sometimes a heron would stand erect and still on some little stone island, or rise up like a white cloud along the black walls of the chasm, and disappear. Winged creatures alone could inhabit this region. The fox and wild-cat chose more accessible haunts. Yet here came the persecuted Christians and worshipped God, whose hand hung over their heads those magnificent pillars and arches, scooped out those galleries from the solid rock, and laid at their feet the calm water in its transparent beauty, in which they could see themselves sitting in reflected groups, with their Bibles in their hands.

Here upon a semicircular ledge of rocks, over a narrow chasm, of which the tiny stream played in a murmuring waterfall, and divided the congregation into two equal parts, sat about a hundred persons, all devoutly listening to their minister, who stood before them on what might well be called a small natural pulpit of living stone. Up to it there led a short flight of steps, and over it waved the canopy of a tall graceful birch tree. This pulpit stood on the middle of the channel, directly facing that congregation, and separated from them by the clear deep sparkling pool into which the scarce-heard water poured over the blackened rock. The water, as it left the pool, separated into two streams, and flowed on each side of that altar, thus placing it in an island, whose large mossy stones were richly embowered under the golden blossoms and green tresses of the broom. Divine service was closed, and a row of maidens, all clothed in purest white, came gliding off from the congregation, and crossing the stream on some stepping stones, arranged themselves at the foot of the pulpit, with the infants about to be baptized. The fathers of the infants, just as if they had been in their own Kirk, had been sitting there during worship, and now stood up before the minister. The baptismal water, taken from that pellucid pool, was lying consecrated in a small hollow of one of the upright stones that formed one side or pillow of the pulpit, and the holy rite proceeded. Some of the younger ones in that semicircle kept gazing down into the pool, in which the whole scene was reflected, and now and then, in spite of the grave looks, or admonishing whispers of their elders, letting a pebble fall into the water, that they might judge of its depth from the length of time that elapsed before the clear air-bells lay sparkling on the agitated surface. The rite was over, and the religious service of the day closed by a psalm. The mighty rocks hummed in the holy sound, and sent it in a more compact volume, clear, sweet, and strong, up to heaven. When the psalm ceased, an echo, like a spirit's voice, was heard dying away high up among the magnificent architecture of the cliffs, and once more might be noticed in the silence of the reviving voice of the waterfall.

Just then a large stone fell from the top of the cliff into the pool, a loud voice was heard, and a plaid hung over on the point of a shepherd's staff. Their watchful sentinel had descried danger, and this was his warning. Forthwith the congregation rose. There were paths dangerous to unpractised feet, along the ledges of the rocks, leading up to several caves and places of concealment. The more active and young assisted the elder—more especially the old pastor, and the women with the infants; and many minutes had not elapsed, till not a living creature was visible in the channel of the stream, but all of them hidden, or nearly so, in the clefts and caverns.

The shepherd who had given the alarm had lain down again in his plaid instantly on the green sward upon the summit of these precipices. A party of soldiers were immediately upon him, and demanded what signals he had been making, and to whom; when one of them, looking over the edge of the cliff, exclaimed, "See, see! Humphrey, we have caught the whole Tabernacle of the Lord in a net at last. There they are, praising God among the stones of the river Moussa. These are the Cartland Craigs. By my soul's salvation, a noble cathedral!" "Fling the lying sentinel over the cliffs.—Here is a canting Covenanter for you, deceiving honest soldiers on the very Sabbath-day. Over with him, over with him—out of the gallery into the pit." But the shepherd had vanished like a shadow; and, mixing with the tall green broom and brush, was making his unseen way towards a wood. "Satan has saved his servant; but come, my lads—follow me—I know the way down into the bed of the stream—and the steps up to Wallace's cave. They are called the 'Kittie Nine Stanes.' The hunt's up. We'll be all in at the death. Halloo—my boys—halloo!"

The soldiers dashed down a less precipitous part of the wooded banks, a little below the "craigs," and hurried by the channel. But when they reached the altar where the old gray-haired minister had been seen standing, and the rocks that had been covered with people, all was silent and solitary—not a creature to be seen.—"Here is a Bible dropt by some of them," cried a soldier, and with his foot spun it away into the pool. "A bonnet—a bonnet," cried another—"now for the pretty sanctified face that rolled its demure eyes below it." But, after a few jests and oaths, the soldiers stood still, eying, with a kind of mysterious dread, the black and silent walls of the rock that hemmed them in, and hearing only the small voice of the stream that sent a profounder stillness through the heart of that majestic solitude.—"Curse these cowardly Covenanters—what if they tumble down upon our heads pieces of rock from their hiding-place? Advance? Or retreat?" There was no reply. For a slight fear was upon every man; musket or bayonet could be of lit-

tle use to men obliged to clamber up rocks, along slender paths, leading they knew not where; and they were aware that armed men, now-a-days, worshipped God—men of iron hearts, who feared not the glitter of the soldier's arms—neither barrel nor bayonet—on the open field, long stride, firm step, and broad breast, who, on the men of would have overthrown the marshalled line, and gone first and foremost if a city had to be taken by storm.

As the soldiers were standing together irresolute, a noise came upon their ears like distant thunder, but even more appalling; and a slight current of air, as if propelled by it, past whispering along the sweet-briers, and the broom, and the tresses of the birch trees. It came deepening, and rolling, and roaring on, and the very Cartland Craigs shook to their foundation as if in an earthquake.

"The Lord have mercy upon us—what is this?" And down fell many of the miserable wretches on their knees and some on their faces, upon the sharp-pointed rocks. Now, it was like the sound of many myriads of chariots rolling on their iron axes down the stony channel of the torrent. The old gray-haired minister issued from the mouth of Wallace's cave, and said, with a loud voice,—"The Lord God terrible reigneth." A water-spout had burst up among the moorlands, and the river, in its power, was at hand. There it came—tumbling along into that long reach of cliffs, and in a moment filled it with one mass of waves. Huge agitated clouds of foam rode on the surface of a blood-red torrent. An army must have been swept off by that flood. The soldiers perished in a moment—but high up in the cliffs, above the sweep of destruction, were the Covenanters—men, women, and children, uttering prayers to God, unheard by themselves, in that raging thunder.

#### SIMON GRAY.

No man's life seemed to promise a calmer course and a more serene close than that of the Reverend Simon Gray. He had for many years possessed the entire affection and respect of all the inhabitants of his parish.—A few words from him calmed angry blood, settled quarrels, and allayed animosity. In his Kirk, in his Manse, in his neighbor's house, in the field, and by the way-side, he was, in good truth, the minister of peace. In his own family his happiness was perfect. His wife was in all things after his own heart; and two sons and one daughter, just reaching man and woman's estate, had scarcely ever given their parents distress, and seemed destined for a life of respectability and happiness. But it is with the humble as with the high in this world; their possessions are equally insecure; and the same lesson may be learnt from the life of the lowliest peasant as from that of the loftiest king. From the cottage and from the palace the same warning voice is heard to say, "Call no man happy till he dies."

Simon Gray's eldest son, a youth of distinguished talents, and even more tenderly beloved than admired by all who knew him, was drowned in a moor-land loch in his father's parish, one warm summer evening, when his parents were sitting at no great distance, in a hollow among the hills. They heard his cries, but could do nothing to save him, when, rushing to the water's weedy and rushy edge, they saw him sinking in miserable entanglement among the long strong roots of the water-lilies. Of the shock their hearts and whole being then got, nothing need be said; but from that evening, well as they were both thought to support it, every one in the parish felt that they never were the same people as before, that their faces never wore such bright smiles, and that the minister and his wife often looked to each other when in company, with tearful eyes, as if an accidental word or allusion had awakened in their hearts a remembrance too tender or too terrible. Michael would have been, had he lived, his father's successor; and some thought that the Manse never looked exactly like itself since that fatal event.

But this was but the beginning of Simon's sorrows. His other son was a clerk in a commercial house in the neighboring city, and in the unreserved confidence of his employers. Regularly every Saturday did he walk out to the Manse—stay over the Sabbath—and next morning before breakfast appear at his desk. But one dark and stormy winter evening, in the middle of the week, he unexpectedly entered his father's study, and flinging himself down upon his knees, declared that he was a ruined and lost man—that he had formed a guilty connexion with a woman who had led him on to his destruction,—and that he had embezzled his benefactor's money—done worse—forged his name, and that, unless he could make his escape, he must expiate his crime on a scaffold.

Simon Gray lifted up his son from his knees, and folded him to his heart. "My poor wretched boy—thy life is in jeopardy! Oh! that I knew how to save my son!—Stephen—Stephen—what would signify the breaking of my heart if thou wast but safe! Speak not—my sweet boy—of thy crimes, great as they are. I am thy father, and can now think but of thy death and thy life. Fly, Stephen, and take with thee thy father's blessing. Perhaps all thy money is gone—I will give thee enough to pursue thy journey—and so also may I be able to repay all thou hast embezzled. O, Stephen—Stephen—my beloved boy, who hast so often sat in thy innocence on my knees, and whom so often I have put to bed after thy prayers, has it indeed come to this?" And father and son knelt down together and prayed unto their God. It was a black stormy night, and Stephen went away without seeing his mother or sister. He went away—but he never returned. He made his escape to America, and died, in a few weeks after his arrival, of the yellow fever.

The miserable father knew not how to break the matter to his wife and daughter. They saw his affliction—and he told them he feared Stephen was a prodigal. But next night, the outer door opened loudly, and two officers of justice entered

the Manse. Now, all concealment was at an end; and next day it was known, not only to the inmates of the Manse, but to all the inhabitants of the parish, that Stephen Gray was a criminal, and had fled to a foreign land.

Over the grave of the eldest son his parents could shed tears of a resigned sadness; but for him who died untended beyond the sea, their grief was bitter and inconsolable. No one ever uttered Stephen's name, although there was not a house in all the parish where his cheerful laugh had not been welcome. Ill as he had behaved, dishonestly and vilely, affection for his memory was in every heart. But a grave look or sigh was all in which any one could show this sorrow and sympathy now; and the minister of Seatoun understood the silence of his parishioners, for his dead son had been a felon—ay, Stephen, the gay, witty, fearless, and affectionate Stephen had been a felon. He had written a letter to his father on his death-bed—a few words—but they were impressed for ever on his father's soul, and often did he repent them in his sleep, as the tears forced their way through his closed eyelids, and drenched his heaving breast.

The terror struck into the heart of Stephen's sister by the sudden bursting in of the officers of justice into the Manse, in some degree affected her intellects; her memory from that night was impaired, and after her brother's death in America had been communicated to her, she frequently forgot it, and weeping, implored to know if he had not lately written home, "He must be dead, or he would have written;" and she kept walking about the house, from one room to another, repeating these words with a wailing voice, and sorely wringing her hands. That could not last long; without any disease, she lay down on her bed, and never more rose. She was buried by the side of her brother Michael,—and now Simon Gray was childless.

Misfortunes, it is said, come in clouds; and indeed one is often not the forerunner merely, but the cause of another, till a single loss appears, on reflection, to have been the source of utter misery, ruin, and desolation. Each of these deaths took away a portion of Simon Gray's fortune; but still, after a few months, he had carried over his whole awakened heart upon the survivor. Now there was no one left for a parent's love; and it was buried below the last slab that laid its weight on his family burial-place. To be sure, poor Stephen was not there—but he had his memorial too, beside his brother and sister, for his crimes had not divided him from one loving heart—and few but his parents' eyes looked on the stone that bore his name and the number of his years.

Under all these afflictions, Simon's wife seemed to bear herself up to the wonder of all who beheld her. She attended to every thing about the house as before; none of her duties to the poor or rich among her parishioners were neglected; and but for her, it was said, that her husband must have sunk under his sorrows. But little do we know of each other's hearts. Simon Gray was disconsolate—miserable—despairing; but his health did not suffer—and he was able to discharge his ordinary duties as before, after a short suspension. She who administered comfort to him, sometimes in vain, needed it more even than herself; for her grief preyed inwardly, in the midst of that serene resignation, and struck in upon her very heart. Her strength decayed—she drew her breath with pain—and although no one, not even her medical attendants, feared immediate danger, yet one day she was found dead, sitting in a bower in the garden, to which she had retired to avoid the noon-day sun. Death had come gently into that bower, and touched her heart, perhaps in a slumber. Her head was reclining against the green leaves, and the Bible had not even fallen out of her hand.

The calamities that had befallen the minister of Seatoun were as great as heart or imagination can conceive. Yet such calamities have been borne by many human beings, who have so far recovered from their shock as afterwards to enjoy some satisfaction in their existence. Men have we all known, with cheerful countenances, and apparently placid minds, whose best enjoyments have been sorely cut down; and who, at one time, no doubt, thought and felt that for them never more could there be one glimpse of joy upon this earth. But necessity is to many afflicted spirits, although a stern yet a sure comforter. The heart in its agonies of grief is rebellious, and strives to break asunder the fetters of its fate. But that mood cannot be sustained. It is irrational and impious, and the soul can find true rest only in resignation and submission. Then mingled motives to better and calmer thoughts arise. Men see the wisdom and virtue of a temperate sorrow,—the folly and the wickedness of outrageous grief. They begin to wish to obey the laws that ought to regulate the feelings of mortal creatures. In obeying them there is consolation, and a lightening of the sore burden of their distress. Then come blessed thoughts of the reward of the righteous who have gone to God—remembrances of all their beauty, innocence, or goodness, while they sojourned with us here; and hope, faith, and belief that we shall yet meet them face to face, and be no more severed. Thus does time cure the wounds of the heart, just as it covers the grave with verdure and with flowers. We cannot, if we would, live without often sorrowing; but neither can we, if we would, sorrow always. God is kinder to us than we are to ourselves, and he lifts us up when, in blind passion, we would fain lie grovelling hopelessly in the dust.

So it is with many—perhaps with most men—but it is not so with all. It was not so with him of whom we now speak. The death of his children he bore with resignation, and thought of them in peace. But when his soul turned from them to their mother, it was suddenly disquieted; and day after day, week after week, and month after month, was it drawn with a more sickening and disconsolate passion of grief to her grave. An overwhelming tenderness for ever drowned his soul—haunted was he for ever by her image, dressed as he had never seen her, but as he knew she now was dressed,—

Wm. PRAN  
115 Fulton

in a shroud  
—of the ge  
unfortunate  
of tears, he  
to think of  
asked, was  
in his grief  
Did all the  
all affection  
Had the s  
he still sou  
of her wh  
what may  
be for ever  
To an in  
satisfaction  
these cease  
worthy wif  
among the  
Simon Gray  
both humi  
She broug  
and pity,  
check w  
thoughts  
gun as p  
and mar  
beauty;  
delight th  
his bride  
day apar  
tion, bet  
lives and  
Gray nee  
borel of  
perhaps  
God to l  
over his  
in his it  
own sou  
how che  
marital  
reckless  
His ver  
—and  
preachin  
low the  
had see  
wife sa  
eared to  
for the  
that for  
the les  
winter  
with in  
consci  
perci  
and w  
This  
with  
could  
too of  
romen  
many  
talked  
that I  
which  
bles  
A state  
Man  
was  
pou  
afrai  
hear  
by t  
to nig  
influ  
um  
fun  
and  
thing  
be to  
to be  
to gre  
out the  
the  
Me  
the